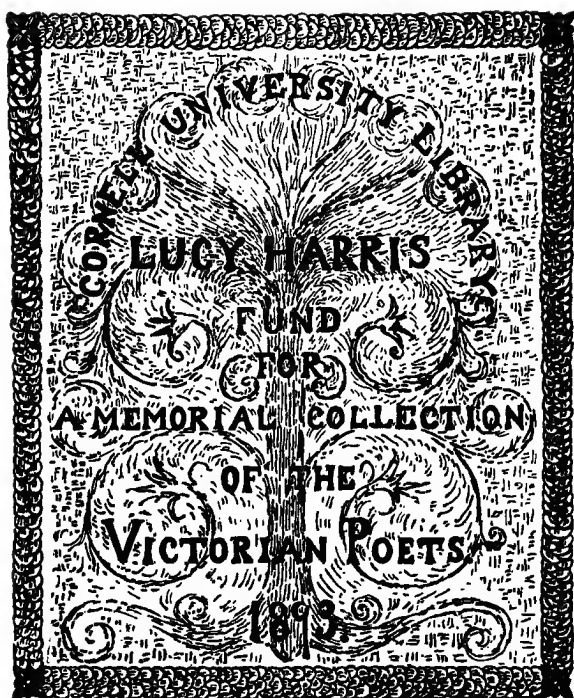


UNDER THE DAWN.

GEORGE BARLOW.



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UNDER THE DAWN.

“ The highest condition of art is when it interrogates the thought of the epoch in the nation and in humanity. . . . The thought of the epoch in humanity—whatever appearances may say to the contrary—is a religious transformation.”
—MAZZINI, *Preface to Critical and Literary Works*.

“ In a soft-complexioned sky,
Fleeting rose and kindling grey,
Have you seen Aurora fly,
At the break of day ? ”—ROSSETTI.

UNDER THE DAWN

BY

GEORGE BARLOW,

AUTHOR OF "POEMS AND SONNETS," AND "A LIFE'S LOVE."



London :

CHATTO & WINDUS, PICCADILLY.

1875.

H Æ

DEDICATION.

I LEAVE the starry night behind,
And stand upon the gleaming hills
Of sunrise, and the future thrills
My spirit,—which was dead and blind
With frost and apathy that kills,
And hopelessness ; I mark mankind
Proceeding towards a kinglier mind.

As one before me sang of stars,
And twilight, and the early day,
And hope the bigots' sword-hilt mars,
So would I, further on Time's way,
Emerging from the tender grey
Of early morning, and the scars
Of early battle, mark the bars

Of happy crimson in the East—
Religions of the world do wane
Like lights upon a window-pane
When the rich sacramental feast
Is over, and the priestly train
Has vanished ; when their songs have ceased,
And sober daylight has increased.

Religions of the world do wane—
But yet the hope of man is high,
And underneath the crimson sky
Of morning, he awakes a strain
The sweeter in that dawn is nigh,
Bringing the close of many a pain,
And many a golden joy to gain.

As summer slides from flower to flower,
From gracious lily unto rose,
From violet unto fervent bower
Of honeysuckle at the close
Of summer, when the winds repose,
And all is silent for an hour,
Till autumn wakes with breezy power ;—

As summer slips from bloom to bloom,
And spring from sweet bird's song to song,
And winter's ice-encircled tomb
Is but the circlet of a throng
Of voices that shall shout ere long,
And blossoms that shall burst the gloom,
Eager spring's brilliance to resume ;—

So man's hope changes ; but the same
Rich life in other forms doth blow,
As many buds do rend the snow
With various shafts of coloured flame,
But each some flowery hope doth show,
And some resplendent, scented aim—
In such a guise religion came

Upon the earth ; the rose of Greece
Is over, and the lily pure
Of Christendom shall not endure,
But this too hath a time to cease—
A fragrant burial to secure,
A rapt and exquisite release,
The ages' sempiternal peace !

The peace of past religions waits
For Christianity as well,
Behold, a new flower at the gates,
A fresh truth to proclaim and tell ;
Behold, with tears the red rose fell
That bloomed above the Grecian States ;
The lily falls : thro' loves and hates,

And troubles outward and within,
We pass to meet the future—we,
On whom the shadow dark has been
Of faiths we had not strength to flee :
Our white rose, of a certainty,
To those fallen blossoms next of kin,
The future for her own shall win.

The intense spirit of Greece is ours,
And all the Hebrew, pure desire ;
Our ~~sons~~ ^{sons} with Hebrew holy fire,
Our maids with fragrant passion-flowers,
We crown—our poets bear a lyre
That sings a song of various hours ;
Their hands are sweet from varied bowers.

The intense heart of Greece unites,
In this the morning of the world,
With aspirations first unfurled
On austere Sinaitic heights
When awful wreaths of mist were whirled
About the brow of Moses : flights
Of fancy, raptures, pains, delights,

Of all the ages, sweep their stores
Into the future's ample arms,
Strange shells from Asiatic shores,
Greek sculpture, Scandinavian charms,
All, all, we gather ; nought alarms
Our eager venture ; at our doors
The past her various treasure pours.

And these songs of the morning I
Would dedicate, my sweet, to thee,
Though thou didst, like a woman, fly
The future's cold austerity,
Eager to test the crowns that be
Behind, desiring to ally
Thy spirit to the starlit sky.

Thou hadst not strength to search the cold
And unpropitious future seas ;
Yea, thou didst dread the early breeze
Of morning, and thy lips were bold
Among the pleasaunces of trees
Behind, and palaces of gold
Behind, and temples tall and old.

The future thou didst quite despise ;
It turns a deaf ear unto thee
Therefore ; thou shalt not, surely, see
With mortal, wonder-smitten eyes
The vision of the morn that we
With rapt desire and rich surmise
Mark in the sunlight-stricken skies.

Rest in the mountains far behind,
Among the temples that shall fall,
While we partake the lovely wind
Of morning, that doth soothe us all ;
Yet unto thee my songs shall crawl
As humble worshippers, and find,
It may be, some reception kind.

It may be that thyself shalt own,
When age doth bring a clearer view
Of truth, that Love's most dainty tone
Was in the singer of the new,
When, his harp's restless cordage thro'
The keen-edged wind of morn was blown,
And fresh sounds and fresh sights were shown.

Few women have the strength to seek
The truth thro' trouble unto death ;
But soft winds woo their fragrant breath,
And roses suit their rose-soft cheek,
And each word that the soft mouth saith,
A thousand lovers mark ; they speak
No truths from austere mountain-peak.

The softest gardens are their own,
The softest brilliance of a lawn
In summer, not the cold grey dawn
And ocean's distant, half-heard tone,
When faint explorers' feet are drawn
Towards some far distant waste unknown,
And winds are from that desert blown

Towards their approach ; to thee I leave
The so-called happiness of life,
And these songs, sung where warriors grieve
And women mix not in their strife,
I send from struggling poet's life
Towards that glad garden thou didst weave
For thine own pleasure—I achieve

No great things ; I have lost my song,
For, Alice, I have failed of thee,
And, therefore, I have lost the throng
Of fancies that I used to see
Around, within, beside of me,
And growing sadness does me wrong,
Tho' once for thee my lyre was strong.

But what I can do, this I do,
And what I can say, this I sing,
And what I may weave, that I bring ;—
The morning is in pleasant view,
And to that bright dawn's skirts I cling,
Hating the past, but with a true
Love, loving the delicious new.

DEDICATION.

xiii

As one before me sang of clouds,
And daybreak, and the hopeless hope
That in the creed he chanteth shrouds
Its form, so would I seek to ope
The gateways of a hopeful hope,
And unto thee, delicious Alice,
I bring the outskirts of Time's palace.

July 15, 1873.

P R E F A C E.

I HAVE been told that this book is only "an echo of 'Songs before Sunrise.'" And, in regard to my sonnets already published, I have been constantly accused of imitating Mr. Rossetti. Having borne the latter charge and the more general statement of the former patiently for upwards of three years and a half, I think that the time has come to say a few words in my own defence.

First let me, on general grounds, protest against the habit which has grown upon the more superficial class of critics of late, of referring all new volumes of poetry to one of two schools—either to that of Swinburne or that of Rossetti. (It used to be Tennyson; but the critics have changed their note.) If an author writes a sonnet with a certain ring about it, and ventures to praise the beauty of a lady's hair, he is straightway set down as a follower of Mr. Rossetti;—perhaps even complimented, as I have been, on succeeding in writing a line worthy

of his master. In the same way, if he quits the region of the sonnet, and writes passionate verses, venturing (deluded poet !) to suppose that such words as "foam," "flower," "sanguine," "bitter," "rose-red," "blood-red," "flame-coloured," "fire," "froth," "barren," "serpent," "kisses," "blossoms," "fruitless," "eyelids," &c., are the common property of English authors, he is straightly and violently apprised of his mistake by a petulant shriek from the assembled critics. When he succeeds, with difficulty, in separating the syllables of this impassioned shriek or wail, and arriving at something articulate, he finds that he has been unconsciously violating Mr. Swinburne's patent : that he is set down, and is for evermore to be branded as a Swinburnian. Now, surely it is time that the insufferable foolishness of this sort of thing should cease, and that critics should read a little further than "foam," before they stamp the book which is under their notice as Swinburnian—a little further than "hair," before they make up their minds that the author is a hopeless imitator of Rossetti. Golden tresses and brown gleamed upon the foreheads of women before Mr. Rossetti lived : and the sea foamed and raved, and lovers chose vehement words in which to express their passion, as long before the advent of Mr. Swinburne. A writer in the *Contemporary Review* of June, 1874, towards the close of a notice of Lord Lytton's "Fables in Song," said very justly :—"It is no more reasonable

to regard the influence of the sire's muse as prejudicial to the waxing fame of his son, as a poet, than to clack, after the manner of a small but exorbitant clique, over tricks of manner, metre, and language supposed to have been stolen from Tennyson or Swinburne, *as if a style could become copyright, or patent beauties were to be protected by pains and penalties.** A fair test would be to enquire whether so called plagiarisms are integral or casual and superficial. If only the latter, or if simply the result of a cultivated taste, assimilating delicacies within its reach and ken, it is well for poetry that there should continue to be 'free trade.'" The above is one proof among many that the abler and more discerning critics are beginning to revolt against the self-assertion of a critical "school," and that healthier times of clearer vision are coming. Would it be believed that I was once accused of borrowing from "Enoch Arden," because I called the sunset "scarlet"? This is the very *reductio ad absurdum* of the accusation of plagiarism. I should recommend poets who wish to meet the views of their critics to sing of black sunsets, and green lilies, and blue roses, and brown foam—that would, at any rate, be original. As sunsets are unfortunately addicted, in common with lilies and violets and roses and grass, to borrowing, with the most audacious plagiarism, the very

*I have italicized the above passage, as it expresses so very happily the folly of the view which I am here endeavouring to combat.

tints and hues of those that have gone before, it is difficult to see how an accurate describer can avoid plagiarizing also.

So far for the general question. Next let me state that when my sonnets were written *I had never read Mr. Rossetti's work*. I once opened his book in the library of the Oxford Union Society, and quickly perceived a certain similarity between his verses and my own. This being the case, I followed my first impulse, and hurriedly closed the book—feeling, even then, a sorrowful foreboding of the tumultuous accusations of plagiarism, which would subsequently be hurled against me. But before I shut the book my eye fell upon a sonnet of Mr. Rossetti's concerning the Virgin Mary. The general drift of this sonnet I bore away in my mind, and on reaching home I wrote an answer to it, which was published in "Poems and Sonnets," part iii., p. 116. This is all the reading of Mr. Rossetti which I did for a long time. I was determined to be able to answer the objections which I even then foresaw by an honest statement of the fact that I had not read the verses of my alleged master ; and, therefore, at the cost of some self-denial, I did not read Mr. Rossetti's book till the spring of this year. Thus the accusation of plagiarism in that direction, at any rate, falls to the ground. This matter must, of course, seem trivial enough to most people, and hardly worth adverting to at such length. Yet it is not a slight matter for a young poet, upon his

first attempt, to be branded, as I was, in a powerful paper like the *Spectator*, as a sedulous imitator of a man whose sonnets he had never read. And when I see the same process applied to poet after poet, as each rises with flushed face and trembling wings, to the great discouragement of honest artistic effort, and the serious vitiation and perversion of public taste (for it is considered enough, in regard to a new book, to pick up the critics' casual cry, and to say of so-and-so: "Oh, he is an imitator of Swinburne; or an echo of Tennyson; or a feeble copy of Rossetti!")—seeing this, I feel that the time has come for speaking out, and pleading for a nobler standard of artistic judgment and a loftier measure of insight among those whom my voice may reach.

Up to this point I have spoken principally of my sonnets and Mr. Rossetti. Let me fairly admit that I *have* been very largely influenced by Mr. Swinburne, though I believe my verse contains sufficient original elements to entitle it to be considered quite apart from his. But of this others must judge; I may, however, be allowed to point out very briefly the cardinal differences between the point of view of "Songs before Sunrise" and that of "Under the Dawn." Mr. Swinburne's book is pantheistic: mine is theistic. While his passionate and omnipotent trumpet-voice gives most majestic poetic utterance to the speculations of Comte and the varied cries of struggling humanity, with constant

political reference to the coming triumphs of his ideal "immeasurable republic," my humbler harp seeks to celebrate the triumphs of an approaching theistic creed, akin to that of Emerson, Theodore Parker, M. D. Conway, F. W. Newman, F. P. Cobbe, W. R. Greg, and Mazzini. The distinction is most clear; "Under the Dawn" is written from what is assumed to be (this is not the place for discussing how far my point of view is the true one) a position beyond that of the author of "Songs before Sunrise:"—further in advance, clearer, brighter, nearer the dawn. The dawn has not yet fully gleamed upon either of us; but theism surely is the nearer to its crimson beauty. Nothing is more noticeable in "Songs before Sunrise" than the absence of the tender personal element for which all forms and phases of the Christian Creed make such ample provision. This element, with all that it implies of hope and love and triumph, the singer, vast as is his genius, has not fully absorbed. Therefore, as an exponent of the religion of the future, his book is incomplete; for much that Christianity bought with dearest blood and preserved by perpetual sacrifice, is pitilessly omitted. Indeed, there runs through many of Mr. Swinburne's poems a sort of passionate contempt for the yearnings and hopes of the individual man; the poetic repetition of many of the anti-personal ideas of Comte. Thus:—

"—Pass on then and pass by us and let us be,
For what light think ye after life to see?

And if the world fare better will ye know ?
 And if man triumph who shall seek you and say ?
 —Enough of light is this for one life's span,
 That all men born are mortal, but not man :
 And we men bring death lives by night to sow,
 That man may reap and eat and live by day."
 —*The Pilgrims.*

"I shall burn up before thee, pass and perish,
 As haze in sunrise on the red sea-line ;
 But thou from dawn to sunseting shalt cherish
 The thoughts that led and souls that lighted mine."
 —*Mater Triumphalis.*

"Fool, wilt thou live for ever? Though thou care
 With all thine heart for life to keep it fast,
 Shall not thine hand forego it at the last ?
 Lo, thy sure hour shall take thee by the hair
 Sleeping, or when thou knowest not, or wouldst fly ;
 And as men died much mightier shalt thou die."
 —*Tiresias.*

It is this personal element, wanting in "Songs before Sunrise," largely present in Christianity and in the theistic writings of Parker and Mazzini, which I have endeavoured to supply ; or rather to make a movement towards supplying. Mr. Conway, in his very remarkable "Earthward Pilgrimage*," says:—"What will be the circle wide enough to enclose the excommunicated Nineteenth Century? We have had a Church of Priestly authority, a Church of Biblical authority, a Church of Christ ; there is nothing left for us but a Church of God.

* Pp. 312, 313.

In that common term of all religions, which priests have preserved in their superstitions only as a seed is kept through ages in the shroud of a mummy, we may behold the germ of the next religion of mankind. . . . Simple theism has but few churches now ; it is a newly discovered and as yet unexplored continent ; but so was America a little while ago. They who, like Plymouth Pilgrims, have settled in the winter time on its rocky verge know little as yet of its prairies, savannahs, and Eldorados ; but they already see that it is to be the next great home of human hearts and thoughts."

It is this all-embracing, all-renovating theism which I have tried to sing. Much has been done for it in prose ; little, as yet, in song. As my predecessor said of Liberty, made one, in his vision, with the marvellous breasts and face of his perfect Republic, so I say of the supreme theism which shines upon the vision of a few,—

"Birds shall wake with thee voiced and feathered fairer,
To see in summer what I see in spring ;
I have eyes and heart to endure thee, O thunder-bearer,
And they shall be who shall have tongues to sing."

GEORGE BARLOW.

SWEETBRIARS, BLACKHEATH,

November, 1874.

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UNDER THE DAWN.

A HYMN OF LOVE.

LOVE sprang from the clean fair furrows, and clove the
abysses of foam,
Where the wallowing sword-fish burrows, the mermaid's
inviolate home,
And over the snow-capped mountains, remote inaccessible
ways,
By the earliest springs of the fountains, sounds softly the
psalm of her praise,
And she shines in the gleams of morning, and falls in
the feet of the dew,
And crimson her banner of warning floats, sweetly
dividing the blue,
And maidens are mute, and receive her with blushes, and
laughter, and sighs,
If a man be a coward and leave her, he sickens and
straightway dies,

By her power all women are stately, and she shapes the
advance of their feet,
As a goddess she walketh sedately, and her presence is
goodly to meet,
And some have been happy and found her in the quiet
repose of their homes,
And chained, and encircled, and bound her; from others
she flutters and roams
In advance as a beacon for ever, as a token the pulse of
her feet,
And her girdle she looseneth never, though a man be a
lover and sweet,
But she dances, for laughter is pleasant, in advance of
him, glitters away,
And no sooner his passion is present than he finds she
was only in play;
So she shines and retreats and advances, and flatters and
slays and consumes,
And her home is a palace of dances, and her mansion a
garden of tombs.

But her feet are as ivory shining like stars through the
lanes of the night,
And her hair she is tenderly twining, and her eyes are as
beacons and bright,

So she lures the pale ships to destruction, and shatters
 them, fierce, on the rocks
Where the waves in recoil and refluxion tear their sides
 in exuberant shocks,
As the sharks and the sword-fish devour them, and the
 fangs of the herds of the sea,
And the waves overburden and scour them, and the
 winds are unloosened and free,
When the long grey rollers and solemn come thundering
 in from the south,
Like a giant impassable column, each curling a leonine
 mouth,
And a mane that blusters and brightens, and shaking
 unsearchable hands,
Till it bursts and disperses and whitens the shingle, and
 furrows the sands ;
But she smiles, doth the goddess, and winneth a wreath
 for each wayfarer slain,
For by blood she resumes and beginneth each epoch and
 year of her reign,
Swift changing our prayers into cursing, our shouts into
 shrieking and groans,
While her hands, being subtle, are nursing broad bubbles
 that break into moans,
For from every wave she can cull them, the bubbles that
 break into tears,

And so bruise, deaden, and dull them, these windy and
petulant years,
And first give a man, for a season, red roses and kisses
and hope,
And laurels and hours of reason and room for desires,
and scope
For love and for work and for action, and labour of
months and of years,
With woman's caress for distraction, and her breast when
the eventide nears,
And her face to encourage and strengthen, and her hands
to make certain and sure,
And her bosom to broaden and lengthen the deeds of a
man that endure,
And her kisses to cover and move him, and her lips to
make tender and white,
And her body to perfect and prove him through the
hours and moods of the night,
And her swift approbation to keep him in the struggling
crest of the van
And to plunge and encircle and steep him in the courage
befitting a man,
And her tender reproach to remind him of feet treading
backward and frail,
To strengthen and compass and bind him in a suit of
impassable mail,

To crown and to cherish and plume him with an eagle's
intemperate crest,
And to scourge and to pierce and consume him if he fails
of the absolute best,
To garb him each day for the battle, and to nerve him
for iron and shocks,
When the foemen like cowardly cattle are smitten by
gauntleted knocks,
When the ranks of the slain are divided, and the spears
being bloody are sure,
And the beaten are bruised and derided, and only the
giants endure,
When the wings of the scavengers glisten as the swords
that were lusty by day,
And the nightbirds gather and listen, and the vultures
collect and obey
The ravenous instinct of tearing, consuming, and gorging
the slain,
Beaks whetted, and talons preparing for a bloody and
obstinate reign.

For this she can strengthen a hero—a woman—by love of
her soul,
Though he be but a coward, a Nero, *she* can conquer,
abate, and control,

And mould, and environ, and fashion, and make him as
iron or steel,
As a sword of invincible passion, as a dauntless and iron-
shod heel,
As a trumpet to sound and be urgent, as a banner to
wave and be sweet,
As a foam-crested breaker resurgent, with the noise of a
storm in his feet,
As a long cloud purple and massive, and pregnant with
boisterous rain,
Or a knight, mailed, silent, and passive, who wastes not
a sinew in vain.

All this can a woman, by simple and soft means, further
and do,
Though she knows not the force in her dimple, and the
magic retained in her shoe,
And her power for truth and redemption, for peace and
for heaven and rest,
And the wonderful calm and exemption from trouble we
find in her breast.
But Love, as I say, having given a woman and roses and
songs,
Is shortly ashamed, and has striven by yeasty impetuous
wrongs

To turn her and frighten and shame her, and melt sweet
passion to scorn,
For who shall question or blame her, when Love's wrath
rose and was born,
With a storm and a rustle and shaking of the black fierce
plumes of her wings,
Attended by clamour and quaking of neighbouring terri-
fied things?
Yea, who shall blame her or seek her of those that have
sight and are 'ware
That the ages have groaned to bespeak her, but have
found but the wind of her hair?
For she flies in advance of the nations, and her breath is
the breath of a rose,
But her bosom provides tribulations, and her feet scatter
hailstones and snows,
And she flings from her plumes being golden, and bright,
and as sweet as the sun,
Many sorrows that slay and wax olden, Life's race being
lately begun,
And she smiles, and her eyes are so gracious, and she
turns as a maiden who fears
Lest the woods and the path be too spacious, and halts
till her follower nears,
Then glideth in front—but she lingers to gather a lily, or
pluck

Some loitering rose with her fingers, or a grass-stalk
dainty to suck,
That he may have time, and a reason to follow her close,
and be found
At some soft and convenient season beseeching her grace
from the ground.

So Love and her glances are cunning, and her eyes are
not slow to be turned,
But her feet are as swift at the running as her lovers are
sure to be spurned,
To be hurled into sorrow and distance, and grievous and
snow-coloured ways,
By the certain recoil and resistance of her springy and
rose-hung sprays,
When a man takes heart and endeavours to pull one down
to his face,
Or covets a rose, and he severs the branch—has mistaken
the place !
For, lofty as ever, rebounding, the rose-branch leaps and
is strong,
And pink laughs tinkle, resounding from the sisterly
boisterous throng !
He has only a twig for a booty, and the rose blushes
redder on high,

With softer and languider beauty, and a softer more
amorous sigh ;
So he leaps, and is baffled, and flutters to the ground with
a sting in his feet,
And curses, and leaves her, and mutters, but the rose
abides gracious and sweet.

So is Love ; and her voice on the mountains was a
treacherous boon from the first,
And salt are the springs of her fountains, promoting per-
petual thirst,
And the palms of her bounty are bitter, and she gives
with a thorn in her hands ;
And she slays with a smile and a twitter—then binds up
the wandering bands
Of sweet brown hair, and increases the grace and the
speed of her feet,
She binds but she never releases, yet the bands of her
serfdom are sweet,
And she laughs, like a girl at a lover, and she calls him a
fool for his pains,
And he knows it, but cannot discover a sweeter that
sways him and reigns :
For the face of a girl, being cruel, is nathless sweet to a
man,

And he laughs to pile fodder and fuel for her greed with
the force that he can,
And he chooseth to wince and be broken, and elects to
be smitten and bruised,
And desires a blood-stained token—to be pierced and
deceived and abused,
And hardly treated, and trodden by the delicate soles of
her feet
Which are daintily covered and shodden in sandals silver
and sweet,
And twined as a ribbon around her, a gracious encircling
cord,
That hath seized and hath bitten and bound her, though
'tis nathless cursed and abhorred ;
For the biters are sometimes bitten, and a snake being
crushed will turn,
And the smiters are now and then smitten, and at seasons
the furnacers burn,
And the seagulls startle and vanish, being dragged under
waves by a fish,
And the eels are rebellious and banish the cooks and
devour the dish.

So a girl has been known to be broken by the blows and
the hammers of Love,

Grow pale, and be meek for a token, and cease to be
seated above
The back of the man she had corded in an iron and
perilous chain,
Which hath snapped, and recoiled, and rewarded its
donor with exquisite pain.

But Love laughs, standing in heaven, and seeing the tears
and the sighs,
And the working of manifold leaven, and the closing of
manifold eyes,
And the ending of months of embraces, and beginnings
of eras of sobs,
Thistles sown in the flowery places, and a thorn that in-
creases and robs
The pale honeymoon of its pleasure—for now he is
cruel, and cold,
And she is alone, and has leisure, and shortly they both
will be old ;
And the roses are dry and are faded, and the scent of the
lilies is gone,
And the bride's cheeks weary and jaded, and the bride-
clothes scattered and wan,
And the violets pale and a scandal to keep in the leaves
of a book,

And kisses are scanty to handle, smiles rare and a labour
to hook,
And the bride, disenthroned, discontented, divorced and
amazed and in tears,
Sees with horror the newly-invented, matrimonial, discon-
solate years.

But Love, as for Love, in the splendour and petulant
pulse of her feet
On the waves that surround her, and render a tuneful
homage and sweet,
As for Love, with her white hands holden on the wings
and the arms of the airs,
She shall not wax feeble nor olden ; her beauty increases
and bears
The future and past and the present, and huddles them
close to her breast,
And to each for a season 'tis pleasant, and to each in the
end 'tis a jest ;
For she slays and dethrones and displaces ; no heaven
is hers, being sweet
With the smiles of immaculate faces and the throbs of
immaculate feet,
But a land of destruction and iron, and spear-points
clustered and keen,

And of wastes that hyænas environ, and tigers, and wolf-
cubs unclean,—
And of loves that are girdled with sorrow, and joys that
are crowned with a curse,
And kisses that vanish to-morrow, and leave us in
trouble, and worse
Than if she had never uplifted our soul in the palms of
her hands,
And made us as angels, and gifted with sacred unspeak-
able lands
Of delight, and of dreams, and of stories, and perfect
and passionless sleep,
And molten and musical glories—having left us to
stammer and weep,
Having left us to groan and be heavy through nights
over-bitter and long,
With never a tune, but a bevy of storm-claps instead of
a song,
And thunder and terror and anguish for her beauty by
night and by day,
That our souls may be straitened and languish, as our
hands have forgotten to pray,
That the faces we see may be grievous, and our friends
as a company clad
With intent to betray and deceive us, and our rising and
sitting be sad, ;

That the mornings no more may be gracious in summer,
nor grasses be sweet,
Nor paths in the woodlands capacious, and fern-fronds
cool to our feet,
And the sense of the pastures pleasant, and the touch of
the plumes of the morn,
And the voice of a day being present, and at even the
sound of the horn
That bids man rest and be quiet in his house in the
arms of a wife,
Leaving terror and sins and the riot of passions for fra-
granter life,
And a calmer more beautiful manner of love and desire
and strength,
And a softer more exquisite banner, and kisses of shape-
lier length,
Enduring, and sweet, and returning in seemly and fruit-
ful rain,
Not foaming and biting and burning with teeth that take
pleasure in pain.
For, when sin's rapture is over, comes sacred silence of
thought,
And conscience burns to uncover the pit towards which
we are brought,
By music, perhaps, or a flower, or some kind voice of a
friend,

Restoring our innate power, but bringing self to an
end,
That the soul may be fit for the healing, and tender and
dexterous hand
Of a woman, her power revealing, and her pity, in choos-
ing to stand
As redeemer and goddess and saviour, with a calm in
the soles of her feet,
And a heaven in modest behaviour, and eyes not a
snake's eyes but sweet
And gentle, and green for a season, till they soften and
shade into brown,
For the simple and generous reason, that pity has melted
them down,
Their colour improving, refining, and blending, and mix-
ing, till each
As the glance of a song-bird is shining, and gracious as
such is her speech,
For she tarries and steps and advances, as a light flaming
into the gloom,
And her feet have a murmur of dances, and her hands
are as swords to consume
The horror and wrath and uncleanness, and madness
and craze in the eyes,
For a change introducing serenity, and valour and
duty for lies,

And tortuous coils and exactions, and trumpery pitiful
ways,
And selfish incessant distractions of souls that were lost
in a maze
Of foul thoughts, solitude, error, remorse, suicidal despair,
And agonized thunder-struck terror, and hell's hot inordinate air;
But now she relieves him, and moves him, and speaks to
him gently, and tries
How a woman can comfort, and proves him by the lamp
and the love in her eyes,
Having sought him, and finally found him, she will bind
him in rose-spun bands,
For her grace and her pity has crowned him, and her
tender and maidenly hands
Shall annul and disperse and uncover the heads and the
crowns of the past,
For is he not hers and a lover, and has she not won him
at last ?

There are many divisions, and phases, and sides and
solutions of Love
Who sits as a woman that grazes, with one arm lifted
above

Her beautiful clear-veined shoulders, the stones on the
heavenly floor,
But her foot reaches down to the boulders that cover
hell's rock-strewn shore ;
Like a maiden who sits by a river, and one hand loosens
her hair,
But her feet are playful, and shiver, and shine, and are
lissom and fair
In the cool weed-haunted waters—for her face is as
heaven, but her feet
Tarry where foul river-fog slaughters ; but her hands and
her tresses are sweet.
So is Love that encloses and handles both foul and
celestial things,
Having harlequin separate sandals, and diverse unsimilar
rings
On her dainty bediamonded fingers, and flowers and
leaves in her hair,
Some possessed by an odour that lingers, like dreams of
a bride, on the air
So gently and softly and sweetly, one cannot but hold
and be sure
That a flower encircled so meetly *must* be gracious and
wholesome and pure.
But blossoms there are which are loaded with a heavy
and obstinate scent,

Whose bloom, being bruised and corroded, an atmosphere evil hath lent,
Black, sad with cold loss and repentance, and a sense of departure and tears,
And an iron inflexible sentence of lonely and pitiless years;
For he shall not renew nor discover the ancient ineffable days,
When a maid by the side of a lover stepped, softly dividing the sprays,
And the tangles, and woodland arches, and the ferns with the grace of her feet,
'Those delicate mutual marches, divine, and a memory sweet
In abysses of waste recollection, by the founts and the birth-place of tears,
And the grey rocks piled in connection with glaciers frozen of fears,
And rain, and the waters of sorrow, having snows as a shadow above,
With barely a gentian to borrow the hues and the savour of love.

Now Time, and its curse, matters little, and visions hasty and few

Impede not a jot nor a tittle man's love, so it only be
true ;
For I see that the passion of Dante rose clear, and its
colour was born,
From the short condescension and scanty of years inter-
cepted and torn,
By a grievous death and a bitter, and a new grim horror,
in twain,
Yet a purer and sweeter and fitter the ages have searched
for in vain,
A calmer and clearer and stronger, more golden and
great in the end,
For God has no cunning a longer more delicate lover to
send,
Whose feet are as soft as embraces, and his voice as the
strings of a lyre,
And his visions as heavenly faces, and his mantle as
heavenly fire
Streaming over and through him and round him, till he
gleams as the globe of the sun,
Which has quitted its altar, and bound him in rays that
encircle and run
Round the wonderful forehead, creative, and shadowed
by calm of the bays,
And the deep dark eyes, contemplative, as a prophet's
unsearchable gaze,

As a prophet's, fixed, firm, and, in season and out of it,
 piercing the sky
Like an eagle's, for none other reason than this—'tis
 their nature to fly,
And to leap, and exult in the regions where never a bird
 else flew,
But *their* plumes, by battalions and legions, have cloven
 and smitten the blue,
By companies, squadrons, surmounting the azure im-
 pregnable airs,
Old triumphs and goodly recounting to young irresistible
 pairs
Of soft-plumed eaglets aspiring to mount to the feet of
 the sun,
Wings failing them not, neither tiring, till the red long
 journey is done.

Although Love seems to be cruel, she shall in the end
 be sweet,
It lasts not for ever, this duel 'twixt Love and our vehe-
 ment heat,
For, if a man be faithful, he finds, when he shall have
 died,
Love's bosom soft, not wrathful, and her heart as the
 heart of a bride—

As the heart of a bride being gracious when night and its
wonderment nears,
And the halls of love's palace are spacious, and she min-
gles, with delicate fears,
Sweet kisses and sobs—retrograding, advancing, and
doubtful of heart,
Desires alternate invading each maidenly dubitant
part ;
For passion and eagerness kindle the red, sweet gleams
in her face,
But they sink and diminish and dwindle, for modesty
yielding a place,
And the old coy terror and girlish, when he steps in his
fortitude near,
For he seems as a wronger and churlish, and her heart
beats swift and in fear,
Like the beautiful innocent panting of a sweet bird held
in the hand,
While the boy who has seized her is ranting, and rude,
and his comrades stand
In a circle to praise his achievement, and the new-found
delicate bird,
For they share not her sobs and bereavement, nor the
wailing of parents heard,
Who circle, with bitter intoning, round their careless
unscrupulous heads,

.

And shrieking, and calling, and moaning—but the boys
stride home to their beds.
And lo ! in the cool of the hours of even the nestling
fails,
And is one with all dead, sweet flowers, and her wings
are as mute as the veils
That folded and shrouded and shielded the lilywhite form
of Elaine
When her heart being broken had yielded to Lancelot's
pitiless reign.
So the maiden is sweet and uncertain, and her diverse
unsearchable moods
Spread a soft unaccountable curtain across her—she
brightens, and broods,
And sobs, and will smile, and will languish, and her
beauty is urgent and beams,
Next she pines as a prisoner in anguish, and her bosom
is pregnant, and teems
With sighs and with yearnings unuttered, unspoken and
wonderful things
Half coyly and timidly muttered—next the songbird
recovers and sings
With soft and expedient passion, and a tuneful but
tremulous voice,
In so tender and loving a fashion that he cannot but
weep and rejoice

That at last he has softened and brought her to a sense
of his presence and calm,
And a sense of the love that has sought her with firm
irresistible palm
Through oceans and valleys and trouble, and over the
mountains and hills,
Through sorrows that served to redouble his passion,
and iron-hewn ills
His sword has been potent to shatter, and has cloven
their foreheads in twain,
But—she loves him, and what does it matter, that sound
of invisible pain,
Of long-past chains, and the rattle of previous shackles
and bands,
And the gleams of that hard-fought battle, and the signs
of importunate lands
Long traversed and left and forgotten when roses and
beauty are near,
Like the lilies whose roots lying rotten recollect but the
dawn of the year.
But still she needs gentle invasion, for she knows not
what Heaven is like,
And a delicate seemly persuasion, till her colours droop
softly and strike,
Like the drooping attire of a lily shone hotly upon by
the sun,

In some region unshady and hilly, where arbours and
groves there are none,
But rocks, and the valleys, and voiceless, tossed floods
of grey boulders and stones—
So the lily is faded, and choiceless, and robbed of her
silvery tones,
The sweet low sounds that are ready by the banks and
the lips of a stream,
When white leaves laugh in an eddy as white hands
wave in a dream.
But to-morrow she knows, and her beauty is tenderer,
far more soft,
Being kissed and imprisoned for booty, for a prize, not
seldom but oft,
In his hands that are gentle and pressing, and his lips
that are tuneful and sure,
And his arms being wide and caressing, and his body a
garden, and pure,
And filled with the fruits of desire, and of sacred and
soundless dreams,
When the nights are an ocean of fire, and the mornings a
mantle of beams,
Flung wild, from the flights of the swallows next the
circles and rims of the sun,
Those fathomless untold hollows no feet of a sinner have
won ;

For at morning comes swift revelation to a mortal embracing a bride,
For a season as one of the nation of angels, and hurled in the tide
Of gold-winged creatures ascending for ever the ivory stairs,
Their plumes intermingling and blending with the feathers and feet of the airs
That laugh, intercircle, and clamour, like countless exuberant herds
Whom the sun's risen crown doth enamour, or frolicsome thousands of birds
Flying upward, and striking and flapping the flushed red face of the morn,
Till her eyes are unclosed by the clapping of pinions, and straightway is born
A young child naked and solemn, the untried dawn of a day,
With body yet smooth as a column, and feet unenfeebled, and grey
With the dews that caress, and surround him, and are soft, and as pearls in his hair,
Having smitten and blinded and bound him in volumes of vehement air—
As a man who with urgent endeavour, and laughter, and lips that are sweet,

Pelts a woman with flowers, and never gives over till
down to her feet
She shines as a bower of roses, and violets, and cowslips,
and may,
Till her pouting rejoinder discloses that she knows he
was only in play,
And her face is so beautiful, smiling through the leaves
and the various hues,
That his hands are already re-piling new flower-heaps
whence he may choose.

But Love and the moods of a maiden are endless, and
woe to the man
Whose mind, over-burthened and laden, sings loudly and
strong in the van
Of beauty and laughter and kisses, and the diverse shades
of her eyes,
For, in that he numbered her blisses and told them, she
shuns him and flies,
Runs gaily, and wildly, and madly, being woman and
frail and perverse,
Into arms that will cover her sadly, and give her no folly
to nurse,
Being grave, and of common-hewn fashions, not ringed as
with flowers and songs,

And girdled with voluble passions, and fancies in turbulent throngs,
That leap and amaze and surround her, till her loveliness falls burnt blind
With the blossoms with which they had crowned her, and seeks for a pruder mind,
More calm, robed also sedately, with a quieter tone in his feet,
And an elderly presence and stately, and an ancient and orderly beat
Of passions in order, and under supreme and a quiet control,
Not raging and rending in sunder the storm-tossed sides of the soul,
But holding her gently, and seeing *some* beauty, no doubt, in her eyes,
Then turning, and sleeping, and fleeing her presence, for, friends, *he is wise* !—
“ And a man is a fool to be taken and seized by a woman by storm,
The wings of his fortitude shaken, and his brain over-eager and warm
With incessant, intemperate craving, and his heart over-burthened and mad
With mute unavoidable raving, and his days garbed grimly and sad,

And his nights as funereal mansions, in trappings engendered of sighs,
And his dreams as delirious expansions of day's storms, troubles, and lies.
A man needs change, and distraction, and not to be caged with a wife,
And sundered from vehement action, and the great undertakings of life ;
For a woman is small to fill only the brain and the heart of a man,
Being large, left empty and lonely in such case—no wife can
Be more than a comfort, and tender, and a soft recollection at home,
But let no man make a surrender of the feet that should flutter and roam,
Exploring, and proving, and sounding, with masculine powerful strides,
The furthest world—surrounding a bevy of brainless brides !”

So they think ! the men who, with iron, seize, hamper, and harrow, and chain
The women whose hearts they environ, thank Heaven, not seldom in vain !

But the poets, whose life is no better than one long passionate yearn,
One ceaseless strain at a fetter, one restless stamp and return,
Like a leopard whose wearisome marches have crumbled the floor of his cage,
For he sighs for the green broad arches of the forest, and grinneth in rage,
And wild unappeased recollection of his home in the heart of the rocks,
Where fawns are a daily refection, and totter 'neath velvety knocks—
As a man from the hand of a lady, who loves to be smitten and bruised
By her velvety palm, and the shady long curved claws carefully used ;
For she folds, and conceals, and retains them, till her moment is present and clear,
Then, swift, like a leopard, outstrains them, till he shrinks and is pallid for fear,
Though he learns in the end, in a season, that sweeter it is to be slain
By a beautiful woman in treason than to conquer a lesser, and reign
Over some meek-mouthed and subsiding, obedient, commonplace girl

Voice over-subdued to be chiding, and lips over-solid to
curl,
And brain over-fat to be cruel, and hands over-timid to
smite,
To break up a lover as fuel, and torture, and linger, and
bite,
And watch, with the face of a leopard, his sorrow—then
sparkle, and smile,
And seek, like a wandering shepherd, a new sheep's face
to defile !

The poets whose life is no better than one long pas-
sionate yearn,
Give loves that are true to the letter as woman's are
certain to turn,
Recoil, and astonish, and bruise us, being bent like a reed
in the hand,
For, "men are but made to amuse us, as puppets to
please us, and stand
Like dancers or dolls in the middle of a circle of women
around"—
Who move to the tune of some fiddle, bright-wreathed,
and decorous, and crowned
With flowers and circlets sweet-scented, and the buds of
the fields in their hair,

And tiaras and fashions invented to make beauty even
more fair,
To adorn, and improve, and to strengthen their slender
and delicate grace
Of limbs, and to largen and lengthen their goddess-hewn
ivory face,
To embellish and widen the river of wonderful tresses
that flows,
With a shake and a laugh and a quiver, over regions of
fathomless snows,
' Undulating and coiling and leaping, and waving in long
brown bands
Over fingers dividing it, peeping, like stars, from the
endless strands.

—The poets whose life is no better than one long pas-
sionate sob,
Seek not to escape from her fetter, nor seek they, weary,
to rob
A mistress of hours of labour, for her sweet presence is
theirs
Whether wielding a mattock or sabre, or whether a lover
prepares
Works grand, exalted, heroic, with masculine vigour and
skill,

Unlike the aforesaid stoic, his mistress is evident
still,

For, truly, he *cannot* forsake her, for such is his tempera-
ment

Through life he was fated to take her, wherever, when-
ever he went—

Whether fighting, or if on a journey, or reading, or speak-
ing at times,

Or in intellectual tourney, or traversing alien climes,

He seeks not to shun her, she meets him, she bends
from the midday sky,

And at eventide she entreats him, at night she is yet
more nigh,

When the moon is risen he sees her, he hears her in
every wind,

No poet is any who flees her, but churlish, uncouth, and
unkind,

A statesman, perhaps, but a lover in God's fair truth he
is *not*,

For this man's love doth discover his lady in every spot,
As a rose, as a flower in the hedges, as a silver swan by
the lake,

As a soft-singing bird in the sedges, a soft-voiced lark in
the brake,

The pearly gleams of morning she adds to her maiden
attire,

The moon shines but for adorning, the sun flames but
for a fire
Yet more to enhance her beauty—the grasses, with delicate stems
Inwoven, are hers for a booty, and dewdrops are rich
diadems,
And all the heaven doth love her, the stars, and countless
lights
Whose orbs glide gently above her through sacred mists
of the nights,
And the poet her slave doth revere her, incarnate in
everything,
But most of all he can hear her when ripples of music
ring,
And never he strives to escape her, like common loveless
men,
In the folds of his heart he would drape her, like a
sweet wild fawn in a den,
Made one with her so wholly that, if for a moment
he
Forgot her, Death's melancholy must slacken forehead
and knee,
And into the hell of destruction of being his self must
fall,
Dragged down by a pitiless suction—this being the end
of *all!*

Bound up, enclosed in a woman, as in some golden
vault,
Without her he fails to be human in type—for there is
such a fault
As loving her over-intensely, in a widening boundless
ring,
With no limits nor bars, but immensely, as the nightin-
gales shamelessly sing
With sweet puffed throats over-swelling, in an unsubdued
strenuous way,
Their psalmody pulsing and welling, till the night is as
loud as the day ;
So this passion forewarns and advises of the height and
the heat of the flame
That in heaven springs, sparkles, and rises, where no
tears soften and tame
The free broad play of the measures, and tunes, and the
songs of the soul,
Spreading forth, as an eagle, its treasures, and taking
account of the whole,
And searching, with vast retrospection, the former and
infinite ways,
With unclouded and clear recollection of years and of
hours and days,
And seconds, and dazzling minutes when love was a
songbird and sweet,

When couples were tuneful as linnets, and lips very
tender to meet,
And hands very ready at clasping, and waists very slender
and near,
And palms very close in the grasping, and love's palace
and presence was here.
But passion, as such, is a token of the wonders about to
be shown,
The ecstasies sealed and unspoken, that heaven retains
for its own,
When kisses are perfect and cease not, but deepen and
mount with the morn,
And lips cling fast and release not each other when day-
light is born—
For the first strange sense and emotion is there a per-
petual boon,
Nor is there reflux of the ocean, but a constant increase
of the moon
Of beauty and laughter and labour, of sweet and imma-
culate hands
That know neither sword-hilt nor sabre, but an endless
peace through the lands
Shines, gleams, and is manifest over broad acres of
countless corn,
And crimson expanses of clover, and grass-fields wild
and unshorn

By the covetous hands of invaders, and the ruthless
trample of steeds,
With cannon and carts for their aiders, till the corn is a
pasture of weeds.

In heaven return and are taken the dreams and desires
we saw
When over us fell as a shaken, sweet robe Love's insa-
tiate law,
And we first were aware of her beauty, and the endless
delight of her voice,
Being one with strong labour and duty, and unconquered
heroical choice
Of the firmer side and the stronger, whether life be the
last thing or no,
Whether souls shall endure and be longer than death's
cold enfeebling flow,
Than the waves of the ultimate river that scatter the
ultimate sands,
With a dash and a sparkle and quiver of salt and in-
vincible hands,
On the extreme shores, where the seamless, blue-grey
plants gleam and are cold,
And spirits crowd, naked and dreamless, and wan and
forgotten and old,

To ask for a boat and a steerer, if any may haply be
found
Who shall skilfully usher them nearer to a higher, less
treacherous ground,
Where mountains are firm and are stable, and grasses
are tender and sweet,
And a dead man perhaps may be able to rise on regenerate
feet,
And walk, and may shout, and deliver his soul in a new-
born song—
Then beckon the spirits that quiver, to be valiant, and
hasten along,
For one has made trial and found it, the new and the
exquisite life,
And has clasped and has gathered and bound it, as a
flower made short by the knife,
In a nosegay to handle and cover his naked and robeless
form,
For death is no bride, nor a lover, but a searching and
pitiless storm,
As of hail to unfasten and rend us, as of snows to dis-
perse us and bind,
As of violent emotions to end us, in a rage and downfall
of the mind.

But whether death brings a conclusion, and once slays
each man, or no,
Whether some new and wonderful fusion of spirit and
body may flow
And rush in a torrent together, and so a beginning be
born
Of sweeter, more summerlike weather, and a softer, more
summerlike morn,
And brighter, more summerlike seasons, and a nobler,
more musical day,
Or whether the ruin of reasons and spirits Death's hand
doth convèy,
Being terrible, cold, and remorseless, having never a
boat nor a steed
To traverse that river, but horseless at the hour of ultimate need,
And a man, with no weapon and helpless, shall wrestle
and shout and be slain
By that monster barren and whelpless who slaughters
and gives not again,
But takes and he swallows, and straightway his gullet is
opened anew
As a wide and insatiable gateway with humanity travelling through
In an army of corpses for ever, to feed him and nourish
and keep

His stomach in constant endeavour, lest it fail and be
torpid and sleep,
And so one man should escape him, and rise, and by
stroke of his sword
Unmake and despoil and unshape him, overhurling our
tyrant and lord,
The king of the centuries seated with our pangs and our
tears at his feet,
For he loves to be sought and entreated, and mankind's
homage is sweet,
And he loves the incense of the altar, and the songs that
waver and strain,
And the sounds that diminish and falter, and the voices
that murmur in pain,
And the women that groan and implore him for sweet-
hearts, husbands, and sons,
For as ointment their trouble flows o'er him, and as
spikenard sparkles and runs !—
Whether life be the victor or death be, our swords or his
pitiless feet,
Whether his red throat or our breath be more lasting,
and subtle, and sweet,
We know that Love smileth immortal, and her hands are
the hands of the free,
As a woman she watcheth the portal, and encloseth the
floor of the sea

Of existence in her sweet girdle, in gracious and merciful
bands,
And death is a corpse on a hurdle by the light and the
force of her hands ;—
We know that, though we are forsaken, and our spirits
are torn and accursed,
Love's empire is safe and unshaken, and stable and firm
as at first,
For, like a long breaker from seaward, Love tramples
and passes our lives
Left broken and drowning to leeward, but Love is a lion
and thrives.

MY BROTHER.

TO A. C. S.

BROTHER, my brother, my sad-toned brother—
The same as ever, but yet more fair,
Thou shalt surely find her ; never another ;
And cool, sweet hands of her grace shalt share.

My pale, strong brother, my sweet-winged brother,
Thou shalt know that summer-filled, rose-fed air
In heaven, and *her* face—never another—
And “ the likeness and look of her throat and hair.”

O brother to sorrow, O bay-crowned brother,
With the thorns upon brows as a weight to wear,
She hath to soothe thee, *she* and none other—
Thy soul to the meadows of peace to bear.

O brother, my brother, my clear-voiced brother,
With a name to weep and a name to dare,
That old one love of thine, never another,
Shall be “startled and stricken, awake and aware.”

Ah ! brother, brother, my well-loved brother,
I know thy love, and am bold to declare
That thou *shalt* find her—as sweet, and none other,
And the eyes, and the lips, and the old same hair.

THE CHILDREN OF MEN.

THE children of men came nigh to me,
And sang of the loves that were lost,
And the blight, and the spears of the frost,
Red splinters, and spars wind-tost,
And the tears in their eyes I could see,
And the signs of the swords that exhaust ;

And black-stained woe upon faces,
As when a man presses grapes—
And abundant rustle of crape
I heard, and I saw strange shapes,
And white, bruised arms of our graces,
And necks made red at the napes ;

And sounds of sighing and sorrow,
And sweet, wan faces and pale,
And a dismal multifold wail

I heard, and I saw boats sail
To a sea with no to-morrow,
And a cloudless sky without veil.

And I laughed to think of the roses,
And the loves, and the sweet lost days,
And the untrodden fair long ways,
And the grasses, and untouched sprays
Of the chestnuts, and one that reposes
On the beach that heaven obeys ;

The fair gold beach of the present,
Clothed with stones and with sand,
A beautiful soft-spun land—
And sweet on the floor is her hand,
And her feet to the weeds are pleasant,
And her soles to that wet far strand.

A PRAYER.

O BROAD, sweet death, with tender hands and eyes,
Wilt thou not hear, and flutter unto me,
And let me presently awake and see
The summer—and her image in thy skies ?

June 20, 1871.

THE SAME, AND NOT ANOTHER.

THE same, and *not* another !

The old face, and eyes, and well-remembered hair,
With heaven's pure light upon them shed more fair,

These wait for thee, my brother,

On the cool white marble threshold, of life's last long
stair.

The same, and not another !

As she used to be in the glory of her youth,

A very rose of womanhood in sooth,

This flower for thee, my brother,

Waits, after death is traversed, and sobs make room for
truth.

The same, and not another !

For there is not any other in the world,

And out of it thy soul has swift been hurled

 In search of her, my brother,

And the wings of thy sweet songfulness are choked and
 furled.

 The same, and not another !

For there is not any other in the skies,

And broken thy sweet lute unsmitten lies,

 My brother, O my brother,

And round about thy forehead the cold night wind flies.

 The same, and *not* another !

Or else I say there is not any God,

And a shadow in the place of him has trod

 The earth—and our Mother

Is *no* mother, and abolished is the beauty of her nod.

WHAT THINK YOU ?

LOVE he hath taken away,
And roses, and over us grey
Sad clothes he hath chosen to convey—
Think you that he can be God ?

Yea ! for the rose shall be sweet,
And our lips shall the same lips meet,
When the silver sound of her feet
Is present—at Death's calm nod.

Love he hath taken, and a bride,
And cold is our unkissed side ;
Think you, when this doth betide,
That the king that they praise can be good ?

Yea ! for the flower shall be fair,
In congenial, sweet-washed air
In heaven ; he takes, to prepare
 The very thing that we would.

Love he hath taken, and our soul,
And white seas over us roll ;
Think you he knoweth the whole,
 Is he pitiless—this strong Lord ?

Nay ! for the lily shall be new,
And a dainty attire of dew
She shall smile, sweet lady, to view,
 And over her balm shall be poured.

Love he hath taken, our delight,
And wrapped us around with the night,
What think you ? Can this be right ?
 Is there a God ?

Yea ! for the love is sweet
That tenderly touches the feet
Of Death, and is eager to meet
 Death's keen rod.

GIVE ME THAT ROSE.

GIVE me that rose ! I see that it has blown
Upon your bosom, give me, for mine own,
That rose to which such favour has been shown,
Give me that rose !

Give me that rose, the eager lover saith,
Give me that rose, made brighter by your breath,
To be to me a sign, a token until death—
Give me that rose !

Give me that rose ; you have not given me much ;
A finger now and then, a dainty lip to touch,
But never any boon, no tender favour such
As to that rose !

And *this* she gave him ; nothing else beside.
To another she was given, as a blossom, as a bride,
But her lover withered, grew feeble, and he died,
As did the rose !

DEATH IS BETTER.

DEATH is better ! and why ?

Because the sands of the soul,
That stammer and flutter and roll,
Halt, and are tamed, and are dry,
When their tremulous beads run nigh
To that ultimate fiery goal.

Death is better ; for there

We are not plagued any more
By things we cherished before,
And no love's wonderful hair
Comes fluttering, fierce and fair,
Along that desolate shore.

Death is better ! for life

Is an unsearched desperate pit,
And our souls are swallows and flit

At the mouth in a tortuous strife—
But when Death gleams and his knife,
We do not flutter but sit.

Death is better ; so come,
Thou much-loved villanous knave,
And scatter the mould of the grave
With cunning finger and thumb ;
Believe us, that there are some
Thy coming shall calm and save.

For Death hath a diverse face,
To some he is strong and a cord,
To others the blade of a sword
Keen-sharpened, devoid of grace—
To others a gentle embrace
And a soft and supreme reward.

For as the wind in the dark,
Coming down in a railway train
In summer, is blown in vain
Round that travelling swift-winged spark,
So is death but a toothless shark
To a soul whose life is pain.

One long throb, and a flow
Of one long pitiless stream,
The groan of an endless dream,

And a pale perpetual show
Of sounds that flicker and glow,
Waiver and sparkle and beam ;

But never rise to a lamp,
To the light of the face of a bride,
To a strong-pulsed silvery tide,
But are intermittent and damp—
For souls foam hard and champ
Their bits, when lost loves ride ;

Ride, and are bitter, and near,
That never a man may escape
That following sweet-voiced shape,
But his soul may bend and may hear
For ever the tramp of a fear,
And for ever the rustle of crape ;

And for ever the shiver of hands,
And for ever the feet of the lost,
And the throbs that search and exhaust,
Girdled with steel-spun bands,
For her hair, in sweet wide strands,
Is over him waved and tossed ;

Over him, down to his feet,
A terror, and yet so good
That, just as an image of wood,
He hath halted upright to meet
That shower of soft rain sweet,
Hath paused, and considered, and stood—

And hath tenderly pursed his face
To enjoy, and drink, and receive ;
For only a fool would leave
A goddess-inhabited place—
A distant and doubtful grace,
And an unknown boon to achieve.

FREEDOM.

PHŒBUS TO MARGARET.

THOU art mine, my lady, now—
Eyes, and heart, and hands, and brow ;
Let him sound the bitter trumpet of his loss,
As we cross the swollen river,
And the waves that climb and quiver,
Laughing at the fiery crested heads they toss.

Thou art mine, my lady, now !
Let him agonize, and bow,
And stand staring on the shore with feeble hands,
As we leave his face behind,
Mute, and thunderstruck, and blind,
And his feet that spurn and violate the sands.

Thou art mine, my lady, now !
And therefore do I vow,
By thy lips pressed close, and tender, and thrice sweet,
That I will be to thee
Not a husband such as he,
But a lover everlasting, as is meet.

For a husband is a fool,
And they learn in that slow school
Lisps, and faint infirm emotions, and cold words ;
But ours is such a life
As the merry mad-cap strife
'Mong the reckless, loud, and violent-hearted birds.

MARGARET TO PHŒBUS.

Thou art mine, my Phœbus ! I
Have ta'en courage to deny
And make havoc of the popular foul creed ;
And I do it with a loud,
Loving heart ; I build my shroud,
And I pierce myself, and bruise myself, and bleed—

With my own unwavering hands,
Leaving husband and fair lands,

And a palace, and a city, for thy sake ;
 Counting this a thing of course,
 So I add to thy sweet force
What of love my circled loving hands can take.

 So I carry unto thee
 The true golden heart of me,
Unpurchased and unshaken by his gold ;
 For, in that I am thine,
 I swear that I will shine
As no wife, but as thy true love from of old.

 For a wife is but a dame
 Who conceals, for very shame,
The absence of the quality of love ;
 But, Phœbus, thou and I
 Are as tender birds that fly,
Winged with tender floating plumage, up above.

PHŒBUS TO MARGARET.

 There to tarry and be strong,
 And to hurl a sinking song
On the heads of listening loveless churls beneath ;
 For our children, as a crown,
 Some clear message sending down,
Some clear silver note of warning we bequeath.

In the trees and in the blue,
Where, Margaret, I and you,
In the trees and in the heavens—you and I—
Shall ascend, and, being strong,
Dart an arrow of gold song,
To awake a timid people by-and-by.

That these may be as we,
And may hearken, and may see
Love's true guerdon, Love's true victory and crown ;
And may burst the iron bands
With a might of iron hands,
Breaking battlements and walls of custom down ;

That Love may be as free
As the blue unfettered sea,
Having wings as are an eagle's, and her eyes
Bent in red unflinching gaze,
Through the mists and severed haze,
Towards the circle of the sun about to rise.

LOVE'S FLIGHT.

I WENT a sailing, sailing,
With my lady bright,
Wings failing, and plumes paling, ¹
Through the night.

By many misty meadows
Devoid of bloom,
And dim blue shadows,
Cleaving the gloom ;

By many green hedges,
And rivers, and broad lakes,
By whose edges
The fen-grass quakes ;

By many tall mountains,
Snowy and sublime,

And sweet flower-circled fountains,
Whose ripple is a rhyme ;

By many moons, and flaming
Immense red trees,
We flew together, aiming
Our flight at these ;

By many wrinkled oceans,
Crawling at our feet,
We fluttered, and the motions
Of our plumes were sweet ;

Through high exulting airs
We went, and smiled,
Remembering soft prayers
When a child—

For we saw them seated
As angels, yellow and red,
In the skies, and greeted
Each familiar head ;

Lost to us for ever,
Unanswered, so we thought,
Trembling backward never,
Upward hurled for nought.

But my gentle lady
 Seized my hands, and said,
“ Rest, as in some shady
 Hollow of sweet bed ”—
And then first she made me
 Aware that I was *dead* !

HEAVEN : A PSYCHOLOGICAL STUDY.

A vision of Heaven. On the marble floors
Stood three immortals ; two were women ; one
Passed, as a man, towards the gold-gleaming doors,

Whose latches, by angelic palms undone,
Admitted to an open flowery lawn,
Burnished, and overladen by the sun ;

It seemed about the hour of crimson dawn ;
One woman's eyes shone most divinely green—
Like green seas—and her neck was like a fawn—

Slender and graceful—and she stepped a queen,
And a most delicate dimple on her cheek
Did testify of merry wit unseen,

Which whoso will be valiant to seek,
Like some bold knight upon a perilous quest,
Shall first be pure, and temperate, and meek,

And skilled, besides, in courtly quip and jest ;
But when she smiled, it was as if the sun
Burst with a sudden flame some larchen nest,

And through the tender green red rays did run
Laughing, and lissome on their fiery feet—
Even such a brilliance from her beauty spun

Did overcome beholders with a sweet
Exuberance, and inner sense of bloom ;
And as the impulsive swan's approach is fleet,

And as his breast divides the watery tomb,
Like some bright angel gliding through the airs,
So did her steps the rapid meads consume.

The other lady's radiant brow declares
Keen wit, and subtle force of many things ;
So, swept 'mid many soft celestial pairs,

They advance, and, smiling, each to the other sings
Of unforgotten earth, and daisies pink,
And forests where the fairies dance in rings,

And rushes bright in spring-tide on the brink
Of silver rivers, quivering through the haze,
Where wag-tails stoop their slender heads to drink,

And water-rats scud swiftly through the maze
Of flowering reed, and peppermint, and grass,
And blue forget-me-not, and woodbine sprays

That overhang the stream ; and beetles pass
Through the great leaves of lilies, white or yellow,
That gleam like flakes of vari-coloured glass

Upon the waves—see what a supple fellow
Is that one gliding all athwart the reeds,
Blue-backed and shiny ! Tiny voices mellow

Of happy insects, too, the passer heeds,
And as he dreams upon a thymy bank,
To soothing whisper soothing sound succeeds,

And half-seen shapes do glimmer through the rank
And steamy water-foliage ; star-like flowers,
And here and there he views the nimble prank

Of fishes, frogs, and swallows ; and in bowers
Of bright green starwort dragon-flies are seated,
Not testing yet their vibratory powers ;

And many subtle notes of birds repeated

Flame from the neighbouring woods, like silver streams
Of sound and colour mixed, and a conceited

Loud thrush is ululant ; his bright throat teems
With vocal fancies, and from spray to spray
He hurls the windy utterance of his dreams.

With many visions of so sweet a day
The ladies, swept through heaven on crystal wing,
Had, erst, beguiled the tedium of their way,

Teaching each other novel tricks to sing,
And laughing now and then, as woman will,
Being an artless, simple-headed thing.

But now they stayed each rapid plummy quill,
Seeing a man, and, overjoyed, exclaimed,
“ Ha ! thou art mine, sweet, all unaltered still ! ”

Forth from each face a recognition flamed—
“ He is my very husband,” says the one,
“ The very man I married, trimmed, and tamed.”

“ Nay,” says the other, “ he is that sweet sun
Who shone upon my early life, made bitter
By thoughts impoverished and dreams undone.”

So, like two linnets in a bough, they twitter,
Each fixing on him earnest supple eyes,
That with repressed desire do flame and glitter,

Even as a double sunset in the skies,
One green, one grey, but either tinged with red ;
For in hot cheeks the amorous roses rise.

“ *You* married him—he loved *me* ; for he said
His very soul and all its wealth was mine,
And in a leash his power of voice I led ;

“ So that he cared for nothing, save to twine
Delicious wreaths of violet-scented songs,
And these in many a feathery, leafy line .

“ Flew round about my unheeding feet in throngs,
As bees besiege a blooming currant-bush,
Whose budding honey to each mouth belongs ;

“ So sonnets, with an agile heat and rush,
Did overwhelm me, till, as a red rose,
Down to my shoulders I was fain to blush !

“ Say, sir, are you not mindful now of those ?
“ But, lady, 'tis my wife ! I thought that here
In heaven all hearts were crystal as the snows,

“ And each incapable of any sneer ;
But that, in truth, 'tis not exactly so
I now begin, sweet early love, to fear.

“ Oh ! *thou* didst waken first the rosy glow
Of passion ; when I called, thou didst disdain
The fiery floods that then did overflow,

“ Like some volcano's luminous red rain ;
And so I married *her* to lay remorse—
I married *her* to cudgel thick-backed pain ;

“ I thought Platonic love ! the winged horse
Prevailed in heaven, and that his golden wings
Surpassed all doubt and selfishness of course.

“ I see that heaven is paved with other things ;
That, as on earth, no woman can abide
A rival, but another's presence stings.

“ I thought to float *so* softly on the tide
Of double ministry ; but now, behold !
A fissure doth disperse my double bride,

“ My woman, wrought of silver and of gold—
For first love is of gold, and after her,
'Tis well if even silvery gauze enfold

“The woman fashionèd of later air ;
A large unselfishness, the people taught,
In heaven should give to each the power to share

“Her proper influence, and envy naught ;
But now those sidelong looks do testify
That even in heaven can jealousy be caught,—

“And that strong passion agitates the sky
Wherein with gauzy wings, and crystal mail,
The cherubim and seraphim do fly ;

“See, my sweet green-eyed love is still and pale,
And my soft grey-eyed charmer is on fire
To flesh her talons in the other's veil,

“And red with pent-up volume of desire :
Oh, miserable man ! to be divided
Upon the faggots of so sweet a pyre,

“Thus tortured, and perverted, and derided,
When to be sacrificed for either were
As if a ravished saint to heaven glided

“In cars and happy pinions light as air ;
Now my first love, reviving, burns me through,
And wraps me in unutterably fair

“ Excess of roses, and a pearly dew
Too sweet and too ethereal to tell,
Save only to the sympathetic few

“ On whom the bardic fire from heaven fell.
And now my later lady with her mouth,
So soft, and as the purple violets’ smell,

“ O’erwhelms me, like a garden in the south :
One virgin is the fit dower of a man,
But two do trickle over me in truth,

“ As if two equal-bodied streamlets ran ‘
From a piny mountain, and the one is green,
The other grey, and silver-tinged, and wan ;

“ Even so the pearly brilliance of my queen
Dismays me softly, and her hands surpass
The beauty of all soft things later seen,

“ As spring’s is sweeter than the autumn grass,
And apple-blossom glorious in May—
But all such pink and delicate bloom doth pass

“ Not able to resist the straighter ray
Of Phoebus ; then the sweet grey eyes do gleam
Upon me, and her bosom doth display

“ Scent and effulgence of a summer dream.
My beautiful, my eyes of violet,
That with delicious thoughts do bud and teem,

“ Dost mind the forest-glade in which we met,
And the first love-look, and the first long kiss,
With lips immutably together set ?

“ But now the lady shines who swayed the bliss
Of boyhood, and, behold, she loves me best,
And, like a meteor, risen with fiery hiss,

“ Her splendour overcomes my supple breast !
For, as a swan, she struggles through and through,
With tender feet, the reedy dismal nest

“ Of my sad bosom, and it blooms anew
With lilies white and yellow, and with flowers
Red, purple as the heaven's own holy hue,

“ And, see, she fills me with eternal powers
Of thought and understanding ; O my lady,
Poured over me in mystic maiden showers

“ Of white dispersed effulgence, as a shady
Sweet rivulet doth crystallize a wood—
The soft continuance of that stream had made me

“ A god divinely jubilant and good ;
But thou didst fly in terror through the hollows,
With rapidly receding, tarnished hood,

“ Like frightened purple backs of scudding swallows ;
But now thy sweet face softly doth return,
And over hill and dale thy adorer follows—

“ And all his spirits tremblingly do yearn,
And all his heart is compassed by a flame
That doth divide, and extirpate, and burn

“ The later follies of a lower aim :
O take him to thy breast, and let the splendour
Of thine immediate rose-bloom soothe and tame

“ The ravished spirit that he again would render
To be irrevocably, wholly, thine ;—”
But then a sweet voice, silvery and tender,

Did whisper, “ Nay, my hero, thou art *mine* !”
And I was 'ware that in some mossy wood,
Under a monstrous growth of purple pine,

Over my head a slender seraph stood,
And loaded me with violets, and a love,
From foot to crimson apex of tall hood,

Unspeakable, did circle her ; above
'Twas as a golden halo, and her crown
Was seemly as the gold crest of a dove

Through reverent sprays of larches fluttering down,
Whose back is green, but head as rapid fire ;
And, in my dream, the woman seemed to frown

As if retaining some untold desire ;—
So I became aware that heaven and death
Cannot set straight the bent strings of the lyre,

As one with overweening fancy saith ;
For that a woman will not know content,
Nor peaceful passage of her gentle breath,

Until she be supreme—his heart not rent,
But all her own. It will not do to say
“ In heaven bright-gold unselfish wings are lent,”

For still a woman's shoulders are of clay,
And their pure warmth shall melt the heavenly plumes,
And make them as the feathers of to-day,

Which her fierce soul repeatedly consumes ;
Platonic preachers ! I do bid you all
Forth from among dim philosophic tombs,

And mark this trio in the golden hall

Of heaven, and 'mid the turrets and white towers
That overtop and overshadow all.

Mark the rich access of new heavenly powers,
But see that passion hath the ruddier grown
For influx of red blood from heavenly flowers,

And more imperious yet her urgent tone.

"Each heart," ye say, "shall overshadow each."
Seizing each petal straightly towards it blown,

"And similar tendrils every soul shall reach
Towards similar tendrils, for to each belongs
A repertory of some separate speech,

"And unto God the central Song of songs :
Where sympathy is present, there in heaven
Is union, and the close angelic throngs

"Make marriages, by similar feeling driven !
And many marriages of earth are changed,
And fulsome links of earth asunder riven

"By the broad wind whose healthy breezes ranged
Over celestial fields"—it will not do ;
Though all the angelic hosts aloud harangued

A woman, would she be content to view
Herself dispersed among the red and green,
Red Gabriel perhaps, or grim Ezekiel blue ?

Even as passion on the earth hath been,
So it shall be for ever ; o'er the hills
Of heaven there shines no novel sun, I ween,

Dispersing and redeeming all our ills ;
No novel rainbow, making all things clear,
Illumes the tender froth of heavenly rills,

But there is turgid passion—even as here—
And jealousy, and, perhaps, even hate,
And insolence, and bigotry, and fear,

And, when the seasons hurl us, soon or late,
Into that vapid waste of hazy sky,
There will be quarrels between Ruth and Kate,

Nor will Ruth hesitate to tell a lie,
To bring her Alfred sooner to her breast,
For the immediate pressure of God's eye—

Since, sooner shall a bird forsake her nest,
Than woman be content to mix her soul
With the great soul of Love, at second-best,]

And, since we cannot make things sweet and whole,
 We count creation but a sorry jest,
And join God's laughter, as the wild years roll.

THOU COULD'ST NOT WATCH WITH ME.

I.

THOU could'st not watch with me, my lady fair !
The winds are sharp, and bitter is the night,
And thou art all too weak to wait the light
That, like a lion springing from his lair,
Shall presently be with us in red might :

But thou art binding dilatory hair,
And sending shafts of singing through the air.

II.

Thou could'st not watch with me, my lady sweet !
The past is pleasant, and the future sad ;
The past is easy, but new roads are bad,
And flints are merciless to tender feet,
Demanding many a soft flower for a pad :

Stay, tarry quiet in thy soft retreat,
Nor tempt the new day's labour and its heat.

III.

Thou could'st not watch with me, my lady white !
Thine are the roses and the pleasant meads,
And the good simple crowns of former creeds ;
But not the ecstatic rapture of the fight,
And the endless garland of the soul that bleeds :

I would not change my part with thine to-night,
Though thy rich kisses led my coward's flight.

IV.

Thou could'st not watch with me, my lady pale !
Thine are the quiet valleys, and the rivers
Where the long brown reed suns itself and shivers ;
But not the mixing of red swords and mail,
And noise of broken spears and sundered quivers :

Which, in the end, shall tell a loftier tale,
And one of kinglier more proud avail ?

V.

Thou could'st not watch with me, my lady slow !
Thine are the faces hollow with despair ;
But mine, new hopes, where a new moon is fair,
Casting across wide seas a flood of snow,
Impearling all the ocean from her lair :

'Tis dark with thee, sweet ; but it is not so
Under this crescent and her pearly glow.

VI.

Thou could'st not watch with me, my lady sad !
Where are the hopes and thoughts that soared together
In the old amazing, reckless, foam-winged weather,
And soft prognostications we have had,
Trying fortune at a dandelion feather ?

Thou hast left me, thou art feeble, thou art bad—
And I am but a broken-hearted lad !

VII.

Thou could'st not watch with me, my lady, whom
I would have followed, even unto death

And far beyond, if so thy rose-bud breath
And all thy wonderful rose-scented bloom
Were mine, in such a manner as Love saith :

For then there were no terror in the tomb,
And every sin that bounty should consume.

A LAMENT.

“By the waters of Babylon, we sat down and wept.”

BEFORE I lose Love's being, and my heart
Ceases to feel the pressure of his dart,
I would return, once only, to my love,
As to the sweet nest of a mountain dove
Her amorous mate returns with eager cries ;
So would I once more gird me, and arise,
And seek, rejecting fiercely milder pleas,
Th' unaltered and imperishable seas,
Where, with that soft-haired woman for my bride,
I dreamed upon the silver-flowing tide.

All presents to her feet, and songs, I brought,
And wayward golden gifts transcending thought,
And all the blossom of a hoped-for name,
And passion, as a beautiful large flame

Aspiring, with red increase of clear top,
To mountain-summits, where God's eagles stop
Upon their journey to the heavenly city ;
All tenderness, and fair renown, and pity,
And goodness, and the eternal hope of life,
I spread before her sweet embroidered knife,
That she might slay the very heart of me,
Like a white breaker tumbling in mid-sea
Upon the tiny fabric of a boat ;
So was I willing never more to float
Upon the yeasty tempest of life's tide,
But rather prayed that, clasping a cold bride,
I might awake, with flourish of cold horn,
The mists and melancholy planets born
Among the icy mountain-tops of death ;
Yea, had her sweet and honey-scented breath
But mingled, as a flowing stream, with mine,
We had not been as mortals, but divine,
Made one for ever with th' unyielding gods,
And all their fame, and glitter of their rods,
Mixed in some mystic undivided way,
And ruling, with indisputable sway,
The plumage of the forest, and the corn,
And all the flowers from Sol's sweet breathing born,
The poppies red that fragrant Ceres wears,
And myrtle that full-bosomed Venus bears,

And every tiny blossom of the field—
Some such a sceptre we had come to wield.

And we had ridden as sea-birds on the foam,
And made the azure height a ready home,
And trodden the mystic islands that divide
With white brows the soft Caribbean tide,
Where are all fair shapes, and the water flows
As from some trembling sunset-fount that glows
Against the pearly bosom of the sky.

O sweet breast ! once brought tenderly most nigh
To my own yearning spirit in a dream,
I try the breasts of women, but they seem
But as cold shapes in colder marble dressed
Compared with that tense vision which possessed
My heart, and mind, and body to the feet.

For all the room was filled with fragrance sweet,
An odour so ineffable and strange;
That to no purpose doth my fancy range
The hollows of fair diction, to describe
A nature so ethereal—next a tribe
Of soft flowers, as it were—I saw them not—
Or spirits dressed as soft flowers, free from spot,

Flowed over me, and with clear gentle hands
Removed each stain contracted in these lands
Of poverty, and foul disease, and death ;
But, over and above, I felt thy breath,
My sweet lost lady, as a silver stream,
Or odorous music fainting thro' a dream,
Pervading and possessing all my flesh
And all the tissues of my soul, with mesh
Most delicate, and vibratory, and fine ;
Past sins and blessings in a clear great line
Stood white before my clear transfigured gaze,
No longer hampered with the fog and haze
Of this our dull mortality, but keen
As the true emerald glances of my queen ;
Then came the wonder of your spirit-form,
Riding superb upon a flowery storm
Of snows, and mists, and roses, and soft things,
With dainty flutter of seraphic wings,
Creating, like rapt Jacob, in that spot
A jewelled altar excellently wrought,
So that I said, although I was alone,
“ How soft you are, sweet, and how soft a tone
Hath pierced my melting bosom through and through.”
As with the touch of circumambient blue,
Your spirit then encircled me—I wept,
And all my involuntary senses crept

For very awe at the unaccustomed sight
Of so superb a lady robed in white
Dividing the thick vapour of my room
With wings and body equal in white bloom,
And breasts whereon the scarlet blossoms smiled
Like the soft breasts and beauty of a child,
When thou wast very near—and then I rose,
Desiring this strange vision to disclose
Its inner sense ; but not a word was said,
It was as if I held a woman dead.
After, I slept, but in my hollow dreams
You walked my brain's mute chamber, clad in beams
Spun from the argent tissues of the moon,
And clothed me with so silvery a swoon
That, when I woke, my face was like a god
From whose fair cheeks a splendour has o'erflowed.
I slept, and woke, and slept and woke again,
But all the time you watched me, and the pain,
And dismal solitude, and groans of years,
Fled to a lone abyss, dissolved in tears,
And all the murky vapour of despair ;—
O thou most delicate, O thou most fair,
With sweet short flower-lips, and the emerald eyes,
Hear these last glimmering snatches as they rise,
Recalling all the wondrous things I felt
When spirit into spirit seemed to melt !

And yet you loved another, and our doom
Is separate, and that garden of choice bloom
Was but a dreamy Paradise in air,
Supremely unreal, and so, supremely fair.
For every craving then was satisfied,
A golden god had found a silver bride,
And the sweet torrents flowing from your mouth,
Like inundating streamlets in the south,
Washed quickly with a moist delicious breath
Each sin and every feebleness to death.
Because the dream was fair, it was not true,
I am divided wholly, sweet, from you,
And on this windy earth we meet no more,
Neither upon the large eternal shore
Where Dante's pallid ghost for ever sits,
And near him Beatrice, a sea-bird, flits,
Striving in vain with amorous beat of wings
To re-awaken perished former things,
For loves sink wholly, and their end is death,
And no joy re-arouses their spent breath.
Love, I was tender then—but now I know,
Since thou hast fled and left my spirit so,
That iron, for red ichor, fills my veins
That bubble with intolerable pains
And sick desires swift-hastening to the tomb—
Ah ! as I think, my lady's white wings loom

From the sad corners of Time's hollow cave,
And in the air her banished pennons wave,
As once above the tumbling northern seas
She fluttered, like a white bird in the breeze,
Leading her panting follower quickly on :
Since that date many novel plumes have shone,
But none possess the power to move the stone
That Death's perpetual energy has thrown
Over the entrance of our risen life,
Or loosen his implacable red knife.

Sweet poets round their mistresses have flung
The mantle of the lyre from which they sung ;
With some such melody, had I the skill,
The coming years and lustres I would fill,
Sending thy name, like Dante, in a song,
The eternal haunts and billowy meads among,
That so the untested ages might be 'ware
Of thine own glittering maze of black-brown hair
Which drew me, as a tender forest draws
A fairy cognizant of its sweet laws,
Desirous there to penetrate, and hide
Washed bosom in the green tumultuous tide,
Plunging, as in a delicate loud stream,
Into that moving mass of leaflets—theme

Delicious ! so would I have plunged my sorrow
Deep in those tresses lost for many a morrow,
Removing 'mid their delicate perfume
Each trace of former treachery and gloom.
O passion ! passion ! passion ! now I die
Hurled from thy blazing and voluptuous sky,
Even as an eagle-claw might hurl a lark
Into a waste of deep abysses dark,
Or cleave the broken spirit of a quail
Who sought his azure pasture to assail ;—
But once voluptuously my spirit trode,
Armed like a blazing and abundant god,
The fields that now I fail, alas ! to reach,
Downdropping towards a miserable, low beach.
O passion ! passion ! passion !—once as flame
The holy impress of thy finger came,
Resolving into one tempestuous night
Thy former potency, and pristine might,
And all thy former store of Love's young flowers,
And honey mixed in frequent meads and bowers,
But now thou art but as a woman fled,
Leaving her lover cast away and dead !
For all the world, and heaven, is nothing now,
Not Caucasus with white careering brow,
Nor monstrous marble-pillared Apennines,
Nor tresses of the moist Italian vines,

Nor cities seated in the fickle North
Where rain and sunstrokes dart, alternate, forth,
Nor tumult of the happy bounding seas,
Nor blessings flying on a summer breeze,
Nor all the talk of birds, and lips of flowers,
And lips of young girls in their rose-hung bowers,
And laughter, and their happy smiling faces—
I feel the loss of thee in all such places—
And, from the loss of thee, I rise and wail
Like billows on an autumn evening pale
Lamenting the departure of the sun.
O thou most delicate ! whose lips were spun,
From roses culled by Venus in some nook
Desirable, beside a bubbling brook,
And whose fair cheeks Apollo's glory gave,
And locks were plaited in a nymph-filled cave,
And whose white arms sweet Juno's self alone
Plucked from the handles of her ivory throne,
And for whose eyes swart Vulcan searched the deep
Where gods their emeralds and diamonds keep,
And whose soft limbs were moulded by divine
Dexterity from snows and eglantine,
So that a lover felt thy bosom cold
And liquid, mixed with those sweet flowers of gold,
Pervade his trembling body through and through,
Not otherwise than the descending dew

Drips gently on the slow rejoicing lawns,
As with ten thousand steps of tiny fawns,
Or as the horse-chestnut showers upon the ground
Sweet blossoms, with a tender rippling sound—
O thou most delicate and dainty bird !
Whose voice in the unknown avenues I heard,
Mixed with the tender dreams and sobs of youth,
For whose sake I aspired towards perfect truth,
Seeking with ardent vision to discern
The higher instinct at my every turn,
And follow it through trouble unto death—
I say that heaven, if robbed of thy sweet breath,
Is but a listless, hopeless heaven to me,
Where I shall all indifferently be !
Oh ! songs, and vast abounding tunes that smote
My spirit, sailing as a crystal boat
Through oceans and abysses of fair dreams,
How far away your giant concert seems ;—
When all the sky was as a hollow bell,
And earth was as a vale, in which there fell
The abundant clamour and soft-sandalled feet
Of music mystically tongued and sweet,
Proclaiming vanished visions past recall,
With Immortality beyond them all,
Clear as a gate beyond the setting sun
When labour and its turbulence is done,

And through that barrier with a gentle touch
We pass, emerging from Death's icy clutch
Into a bright array of newer things—
O memory of each delight that clings
Still to me with a frantic craving hand,
Vanish, for 'tis her desolate command !
In heaven if we should meet, I know not how
To gaze upon thee with untroubled brow ;
For thou wast unto me as Beatrice,
Although thine own heart was of foam or ice,
Or as the fickle sea-weed that is tossed
From amorous wave to wave, and straightway lost ;
But I was faithful, and I mixed thy name
With sounding currents of prophetic fame,
And, when I walked in woods, and by swift streams,
I saw thy garments vanish 'mid pale beams,
Clothed in alluring drapery of mist ;
The branches were divided by thy wrist,
As, in the dainty fables of old Greece,
Nymphs' shoulders, whiter than a lamb's white fleece, ,
Were fair against the bending branches green ;
So, with all fair thoughts mingled I, my queen,
Thy spirit, and thy laughter, and thy form,
Whether with purple pulse of thunder-storm,
Or vast irradiance of the gleaming sky,
And through sleep's lanes and meadows ardently

I fluttered forth, as to a trysting-place
Where I should meet some silver-footed grace,
Who, with full bosom and with rosy mouth,
Should pacify the dread perpetual drouth
Of my parched being—all the mountain-spurs
Clothed grandly with illimitable firs,
And with designs and marble shades inwrought,
Were yours, by virtue of my fresh young thought,
And, underneath the starry heaven and moon,
I heard your voice, as an entrancing tune,
And when I pressed my face against a rose,
It was as if the breath that no man knows
Delighted and enslaved me in a dream,
And when the first sun cast his first gold beam
Across the glittering pastures from the east,
I held with thee a lone delicious feast ;
For thou didst so possess me that I felt
All pleasures through thy violent body melt,
As through the violence of an organ-tune
Stream, stars, and sun, and palpitating moon,
All joys and sorrows of humanity
Merged in the tumult of one raving sea,
That shakes the trembling spirit till it groans,
As purple mists of muffled undertones
Swathe body, and soul, and sinews, and dumb flesh,
In one resounding vibratory mesh,

Commingling and dispersing all things fair
As with a current of intensest air,
So that our nerves do creep upon the chords,
Pierced, as it were, by exquisite sharp swords,
Till, if we could, our very souls should leap
Into the abyss of that organ-deep,
Made one for ever with the eternal sound,
And wandering as ghostly shades around
The interior, whence the ghostly concert springs,
Swept onward on inevitable strings ;—
So, lady, doth my spirit fly to thee,
Horsed on the thunders of loose melody,
Ignorant, and craving only to be found
Within the barriers of that mystic sound,
At whose surpassing high command I build
Fair crowns and colonnades with which I gild
The trembling, holy precincts of my dream ;—
O thou most delicate ! O thou whose beam
Of maiden moonlight never fell across
The ocean of my spirit ! what a loss
And huge eternal undoing is mine,
That thou wast never present, sweet, to twine
The undying garlands of thy perfumed hands
Around me, save upon the fruitless sands
Of one immeasurably fragrant dream ;
Through heaven thy weird departing beauties gleam,

And through that heaven,—most hollow, and sad, and
pale,—

I still pursue, with wet remorseless sail,
The shadow of the gliding of thy bark,
Diminished now to a tremulous small spark
Splashing the slender waves that crisp heaven's sea ;
I am not ready to abandon thee,
And by thine eyes' own emerald sparkling light
I track thee through the terrors of Time's night.

Yea, as the music smites my earnest soul
With rapt intelligence beyond control,
I leave the city, and these southern plains,
And all my fancy wings itself, and strains
Bright plumes to meet the northern piercing blast,
Pregnant with fair suggestions of the past.
I stream along the windy echoing chords,
Nursing the assistance that the tune affords,
And feel heaven opened, as my spirit sails
By flowery banks, and through responsive vales,
And many forests, goodly, dark, and dim,
And silver waters bubbling to the brim,
And lanes made bright with yellow eglantine,
And meads impurpled with the heavy vine ;
Through these I wander, searching for my love,
As the grey, winged desires of a sad dove

Flit over mounts, and valleys, and tall trees,
In search of the receding mate she sees,
Till they meet softly in a mossy nest,
And all desires and troubles fade to rest.
So do I, lifting wings of fancy large,
Pursue by meadow, and wide lake, and marge
Of the resounding, pitiless, broad sea,
The flying phantom that I christen thee,
Following through endless ranks of hollow corn,
From eventide till the triumphant morn
Sits on the mountains with a rosy cheek.
But I—I find not the fair boon I seek,
Not 'mid the moist abundant apple-groves,
Spotted with grey disturbing wings of doves ;
Not 'mid the vine-leaves, nor the wet long grass
Through which, with tears and diligence, I pass ;
Not in the sunset, nor the gleams of day ;
Nor art thou hidden in twilight shadows grey.
I may not see thee ; but I fling my song
To rustle, like a floating star, among
The billows of abundant black-brown hair,
I found the sweetest gift of all gifts fair.
Yea, well it was, my love, in very deed,
That thou didst deign but passing little heed
To my desire, for I had found thy breast
A poisonous and over-bearing nest

To dwell in—thou hadst burnt me through and through
As with a fiery rain of velvet dew,
Leaving no mortal fabric to survive
The immersion in that over-luscious hive.
Yea, even as bees are drowned in honey sweet,
I had swooned, a dead man, at thy fair, kind feet ;
But, since they are cruel, my torn life is left,
That otherwise had been so sweetly reft,
So sweetly murdered. Ah ! these women find
Dumb targets for their daggers in mankind,
And when they see us bleeding, they rejoice
With even a tenderer, more placid voice,
And softer movement of white steady hands ;
Their victims redden seas, and capes, and lands,
And still the old passion seizes upon all
Who step within the plastic earthly ball ;—
Surely their breasts are whiter, so I say,
Whose locks are tinged with age-announcing grey—
Surely their breasts are sweeter than of old,
And hair of far more wonderful deep gold
Than when I walked among them as a youth ;
Their lips are riper now, in very truth,
And eyes of far more wonderful bright blue,
Or the unexampled tender hazel hue
That filled the liquid glances of my queen ;
The future differs not from what has been,

But love and sorrow do divide our breath,
And light us on the lonely march to death.
O Death, most bountiful ! O Death, most good !
I wonder, art thou as a green-girt wood,
Filled with the singing of rejoicing birds,
And angels eloquent with risen words ?
Or art thou as some icy hollow cave,
Or moss-built circle of a sleepy grave ?
Or art thou as the thunders of the deep
Wherethrough the sharp-finned monstrous dolphins leap ?
Or art thou as a soft and budding bank
Lighted with ruby flowers and grasses rank,
Whereon two talking lovers may abide
From happy morning till cool eventide ?

I leave the old meadows, mistress, and I fly
To some more taciturn and peaceful sky ;
But yet again the old raptures that I felt
Do burn me, and throughout me storm and melt,
And therefore, weeping, with these many words
I summon up the past—my future girds
Fresh vigorous loins to adventure novel things,
And soon I change the measure of my strings.
The cup o'er which so often I have grieved,
Which from thine hands I primarily received,

Resolveth now its sacred golden form,
Like some changed genius in a thunder-storm,
Into the gilded brackish vase of art,
Containing no solution for the heart ;
Love's crystal thus is changed ; my hand receives
A vessel dank with withered autumn leaves—
For that sweet vase my lady touched with lips
Sweeter than any flower the red bee sips.
O wonderful and delicate perfume !
That filled the faint recesses of the room
When, like a gliding ghost, my lady came
Riding on joyous curve of silvery flame,
I wonder is there anything so sweet
In heaven for the dying sense to meet ?
For surely then my spirit would have fled
Gladly, to join the harp-strings of the dead ;
Yea, over the pale river *then* I passed,
Horsed like a prophet on a whirlwind blast,
And plucked fair endless blossoms from beside
Immortal Life's unceasing silver tide,
Where, seated on that quiet thymy bank,
She waited for me, 'mid the rushes rank,
To give the kiss for which in tears I wait
Now, till I cross the limit of Death's gate.

LOST VOICES.

My power of voice and song,
And harp and spirit strong,
I seized at the sad ending of a day,
And brought them unto her
Who, cruel, would confer
No laurel-leaves, save those with weeping grey,
And in my rage, I broke,
As lightning tears an oak,
The instruments whereon I used to play.

These shall no more resound,
So said I, nor abound
With many-coloured, subtle tints of song :
My flute, and harp, and lyre,
In sacrificial fire

I place, amid the burnt infernal throng
Of spirits, whose parched feet
Do cool that nether heat,
Who walk the infernal burning haunts among.

The voices that were good,
By lake, and mount, and wood,
For ever—yea, for ever now have ceased ;
The voices that could slake
The thirst of sea and lake,
By the broad chants of storm-winds unappeased ;
The voices that could move
A listening maid to love,
Are even as dead spirits just released.

On rapid wings they fly
Towards a newer distant sky ;
I shall not hear their tender voices sound
By river or by marge
Of ocean blue and large ;
I shall not hear them rustle o'er the ground,
As the breezes move in May
Many a gentle, leafy spray,
When the songs of yellow-breasted birds abound.

I shall not hear their sighs,
Nor mark them with mine eyes,
For all sweet loves and sounds are withered things—
Like blossoms in a bed
That once was sweet and red,
They fold late, tarnished, dismal-coloured wings,
And it is as if a blast
Of ice-cold wind had passed
On the feathers of some frightened bird who sings.

The voices that were great,
Ere the coming of dark Fate,
Have vanished 'mid the rushes on Time's bank,
As a rapid bird doth gleam,
Through the grasses in a dream,
Disappearing 'mid their wildernesses rank ;
To whom have I to turn
For the vengeance which doth burn
As a fire within me—whom have I to thank ?

For the passing of the fair
Gleams of sunny former air,
And this whistling of a wintry novel breeze ;
For the changing of the heat,
And of tender flowers and sweet,

Into glaciers where the shuddering fingers freeze ;
For the breaking of my harp,
As by swords inured and sharp,
As by warriors whom such devastations please

For the shifting of a girl
Who is supple as each curl
That her fingers in their frailty move and touch ;
For the shifting of her heart,
That is pointed as a dart,
Being gold-tipped, yet a dangerous thing to clutch;
For the shifting of her soul,
That is as an honeyed bowl,
Yet 'tis poisoned in the bottom over-much.

For these and such-like things,
Having poisonous subtle stings,
Who shall answer, who compensate or repay ?
God ? I say the world is full
As a miasmatic pool
Of foul vapours steaming up from life's foul clay,
And how shall God make sweet
Such a marshy torrid heat,
Fiercer e'en than Afric's torridest midday ?

How shall He in the end
Make such a planet tend
Towards some glad mysterious haven unforeseen,
Bringing right harmonious motion
Out of life's capricious ocean,
With its ceaseless waves of grey, and black, and green,
How shall He, with His spear,
Make the heaven bright and clear,
And the thunder-clouds and copper skies serene?

THE PLANET'S BOAT-SONG.

As I lay beneath the shining of the moon

On a pleasant night in August, I was 'ware
Of the surging of our planet and its tune

As it climbs on brazen pinions through the air,
And its resonance became a poem soon,

Which my recollection struggles to declare,
Gathering up the golden fragments of my swoon,
In its pristine sweet entirety firm and fair.

"I am climbing," said the planet, "through broad space,

And I see the oceans beating on their way
In a blue, tumultuous, never-ending race,

And I mark the crimson jubilance of day,
And the corn-fields waving in their golden grace,

And the monstrous heaped-up thunders, black and grey,
And the little sons of men, each in his place,
At their battles, and their labour, and their play.

“ As I fly through tumid oceans of black cloud,
Like a boat through black, swift, vibratory seas,
Immersing my vast body in a shroud—

Like a coffin unbedecked by flowers—of these,
And the nimbus-cohorts by my keel are ploughed,
And the copper-coloured squadrons by my knees,
A sailing chant at my vast lips is loud,
Ye may mark it, ye may learn it, if ye please.

“ All the neighbouring friendly planets in my song
I shake hands with, and I greet and recognize,
Even as arm in arm our clusters stroll along

The parade-ground and the vistas of the skies,
Gold-haired Venus, Mars the vehement and strong,
And the Great Bear, cunning, silver-toothed, and wise ;
Many others in a swift red-footed throng
Round the spray of my fast progress gleam and rise.

“ Spinning through this blatant series of gold balls
I can mark their varied surfaces of life,
And their various temples, monuments, and halls,
While I rend the swift air as with edge of knife,
Nor is there any lover's voice that calls

To his mistress, or a cannon-shout of strife,
But its whisper, or its thunderous message, falls
On my ears, with wondrous drums of hearing rife.

“ I can pierce the purple heather on the hills,
I can enter crystal palaces of seas,
And sweet fountains which a sweeter presence fills,
Even mermaids with their snowy arms and knees,
I can fathom the deep secrets of deep rills—
For creation is as open as I please,
And the general energetic whisper thrills
All my spirit, as the thyme-scent maddens bees.

“ All the battles and the tumults of the earth
Are a festival, a proper part of me,
Yea, a portion of my green surpassing girth,
And rich feeders of my deep tempestuous sea,
Bringing roses and anemones to birth,
And white lilies and such timid things to be,
And originating red-lipped maidens’ mirth
Out of horror and fierce strokes and agony.

“ What if one man perish ? Truly, *let him fall !*
Are there not ten thousand others just as good,
Whom ten thousand girls expect in tower and hall,
And ten thousand mothers watch on hill and wood—
Twenty thousand valiant hearts on which to call,
Where one cowardly soul has withered, having stood
As a coward upon my brave progressive ball,
Where each dweller has made progress as he could ?

“ By the underlying attitude of things,
Which the seekers and the singers dub sublime,
Every bird by brave necessity hath wings,
Every mountain-goat strong feet wherewith to climb,
Every poet talent by the which he sings
And creative force well fitted unto rhyme,
Even as I myself disperse the airy rings
By my pinions to a right melodious time.

“ Let a man be wicked, sinner, if he may—
He but feeds the stalwart universal plan,
He but feeds its greatening course from day to day,
He but feeds it as his cringing spirit can,
Built of stubble and of pewter-stuff and clay—
Let a man strive as a hero in the van,
He but serves the great progression to obey,
With the spirit and the purpose of a man.

“ Not a soul shall be sufficient to retard
The great passion of the seasons, as they roll
Through the wintry barriers, iced and mute and hard,
Towards fair summer seasons where fair lovers stroll
Through each forest, and in every city-yard,
For the wings of Time are excellent and whole,
And no power of human effort hath debarred
Their supreme effulgent course, beyond control.

“ From my high, exalted eyrie I look down,
And I see the blood-stained terror and the sins
That contaminate each hill and lake and town,
But I' also see the goal the future wins,
And Earth's future clear and unpolluted crown,
When the clearer reign of Excellence begins,
And things sweet and pure and tender wear renown :
Towards this consummation every planet spins.

“ When the rivers of the Earth shall run no more
Fouly mixed with signs of foul decay and mud,
And the silver waves shall beat on Virtue's shore,
And the streams shall not be coloured as with blood,
And the silver fountains as with human gore,
But the waters shall be one delicious flood,
Sweeter, purer, and more crystal than of yore,
Bearing pearls and precious jewels in the bud.

“ Let a man by power endeavour to withstand
The necessity that beareth Time's slow song
Towards the future, glad, voluptuous, sinless strand,
And it is as if he strove against the strong
Waves that slowly eat the slowly sinking land,
With their billows fierce and iron-tongued and long,
Climbing onward in a fierce and clamorous band ;
Even such is the sure overthrow of wrong.”

CHRIST'S SERMON IN THE CITY.

BENEATH our haze of London smoke
Christ stood in human garb again,
Bearing once more the fleshly yoke
Of sorrow, and of fiery pain,
And this world's fiery blows that rain
On strongest rowers, as they strain
Broad heaving chests at every stroke :

Hurling the world's slow vessel through
The palpitating seas of Time,
And sundering the flashing blue,
In harmony to sweet-voiced rhyme,
In harmony to Progress' chime,
Watching her full-mouthed chant sublime,
Most ancient, yet ever new ;

Hurling the world's slow boat along
With struggle, and with yearning sobs,
And eyes that worship Progress' song ;
Yea, each adoring bosom throbs
As if a woman sits and robs
Their spirits, flying like the globes
That greet the oars, a frantic throng,

After her swift exulting feet—
So Progress sits within the stern
Of this world's vessel, and we greet
Her countenance at every turn,
And our adoring spirits burn, !
And all our hearts do follow, and yearn
For pressure of her bosom sweet.

Yea, 'as we struggle at the oars,
We meet her with clear yearning eyes,
And she transfers from moving shores
Her own to our looks as they rise,
Even as a lover, rowing, tries
To catch with some new sweet surprise
His lady's glance, which veers and soars,

Timid, and steering carefully,
And glancing fast from side to side,

Dreading the river, or the sea,
And rude tumultuous boats that ride,
Having for freight no gold-haired bride,
Upon the swift alarming tide
That seeks the ocean : so do we

Worship our mistress at the helm,
And, governed by the sweet grey eyes,
Dread tempests none that overwhelm
With sudden shock of white surprise
Ignoble spirits, as they rise
From where the westward thunder lies
In Neptune's black uncertain realm.

And Christ has come to take again
His share of modern work and toil
Tempestuous, and his share of pain
And misery 'neath suns that broil,
And languid sickly moons that foil
The lamps that would be filled with oil,
And ready for the Bridegroom's reign.

He stands within the city, dressed
In ordinary quiet guise,
But with a passion unrepressed
Gleaming from deep-set wells of eyes,

Whence pity and love, triumphant, rise
And seek with weeping wings the skies—
Yea, through our city's smoke-fed vest !

He stands within the city's smoke,
Far more a man, and more a god
Than when he bore the Hebrews' yoke,
And scourged the proud men with his rod,
And comforted with kindly nod
Sinners whose tears had stained the sod,
Who wept 'neath alder brown, and oak.

Far more a god than ever when
His Manhood was denied, and he
Was separated from the men
His glorious spirit died to see
For ever white, and firm, and free,
Not bending slavish neck, or knee,
On mountain, or by lake, or glen,

Even to himself exalted high
And placed upon a special throne,
Brought nearer to the Father's eye
Than any follower of his own,
Brought closer to the heavenly tone
Of cymbals—further from the moan
Of earth's perpetual agony.

Further from all the cares of earth,
Uplifted as a special son
Of more than ordinary worth
Towards heaven, and rivalled here by none,
Though all life's golden threads are spun
From God's hands, and their tissues run
Round every cradle and new birth.

Standing within the city's smoke,
With fiery accent Christ reproves
His worshippers who place a yoke
Upon the nations Time removes
With pitiless fingers from the grooves
Our shoulders suffer—for he loves
Truth most of all, as when he spoke

In pinnacled Jerusalem,
Saying, "The soul that learns of me
Shall wear the Truth for diadem,
And Truth shall set his spirit free
From every slavish misery,
Nor shall he longer bow the knee
To any gold tyrannic hem,

"Whether of sin, or fate, or devil—
For I will shortly free the race

From the red thralldom of things evil,
Even by the marring of my face
In that accursed bitter place
Where, without beauty, without grace,
With fiends around me in loose revel,

“ I conquer Satan once for all ;
Let every brave man do the same,
And step as high in heaven’s fair hall
As if with Christ’s own feet he came ;
Yea, let him nourish clearer flame
Of purity, and heal the lame
And sickly, and release from thrall

“ The sinner with far surer hand
Than ever was my own, when I
Sent lame men leaping through the land,
And blind men eager now to try
To pierce with happy gaze the sky,
Freed from the darkness where they lie,
An ignorant and hopeless band.

“ I still preserve the metaphors
With which my first disciples spake,
Hushing the silver-dripping oars
To listen, in that lonely lake,

To tales they fashioned for my sake,
In that they loved me ; but the break
Of day brings brighter, lovelier stars,

“ And sweet Truth shines upon the hills ;
Ye see, no longer through a cloud,
Those ancient Galilean rills,
And Jesus in his agony bowed
Like any poor man who has ploughed
And toiled, or any saint that vowed
To God the oil with which he fills

“ The vase of his self-sacrifice ;
At last ye see me as I am,
No God on mounts of snow and ice,
No sacrificial sheep or ram,
With power to save and power to damn,
In no such guise my spirit came
To thread the dismal haunts of vice

“ And call the evil therefrom ; rather
As a pale-browed heroic man,
A pale self-sacrificing father,
Or lover, eager if he can,
To perish in the rose-red van,
With forehead on a sudden wan,
If so his dying soul may gather

“ Red bloom of glory for the sweet
Pale woman looking out for news,
There where the rocks and water meet
And mingle browns and greys and blues,
And the great coasting vessels cruise
In England—fearing lest she lose,
Yet worshipping, with woman’s heat

“ Of silent passion, as her own
Her lover’s surely coming glory—
With some such shout, with some such tone,
I perished on the gallows gory
Before my youthful head grew hoary ;
And, as upon a promontory
A dying bird is backward blown

“ Into the deep abyss of cliff,
Yet finds death better than it seems,
Or as the thin keel of a skiff
Doth vanish with gold transient gleams,
Drawn down beneath the ocean-streams,
And finds a pleasant vale of dreams,
So Death to me was gracious ; if,

“ My brothers, ye would apprehend
The Hebrew hero who has swayed

These stormy years from end to end,
The first thing—cease to be afraid ;
The second—cease to be delayed
By priestly fervent cries conveyed
Along the cars the breezes lend ;

“ And, thirdly, with clear vision enter
That fragrant universal room
Whereof each mortal is the centre,
And yet the very outmost bloom :
Believe no dreams of broken tomb,
I traversed hell, *I* saw death's gloom,
In spite of many a brave inventor !

“ I am risen ; only risen as
Ye now *must* fail to comprehend ;
Not with the foot that trode the grass
In Galilee ; my clear limbs bend
To earthly airs no longer :—friend,
Listen to me, and condescend
To hear the very fact that was :

“ I saw their marvellous fond tales
With pity, yet with yearning love ;
They strove to tear aside the veils
God wears, and watch without a glove

His bright hand lowered from above,
They inclosed His Spirit in a dove,
A bird that sickens, throbs, and ails ;

“ They inclosed Himself in human form,
Yes, brethren, centred even in me,
And gave their God a body warm,
And muscles, and a sinewy knee,
That their slow faithlessness might *see*,
Not knowing God, not knowing that He
Is visible in every storm,

“ Riding upon the outspread wings
Of time, of thunder, and of space,
Not closed in any fleshly rings,
But manifested in each place,
And in each innocent child's face,
And every delicate girl's grace,
And throat of every bird that sings—

“ And valiant shoulders of a man,
And inmost tissues of the brain,
The bravest sword in every van,
The foremost 'mid the bloody rain,
And sweetest rhyme in every strain—
Yet Personal He doth remain,
Invisible since time began.

“ The perfectly incarnate God
Is in the perfect coming race
That shall achieve a kingly rod
And queenly sceptre in each place ;
Yea, herein shines the Father's face,
And His unspeakable clear grace,
And their foot sounds upon the sod,

“ As His foot ; but the Hebrew king,
The past Jehovah, even I,
Already to my garments cling
Signs of decay ; I have to die,
That Man may be exalted high,
And many a bright bird in the sky
The praise of his new sceptre sing.

“ Let God and Man be all in all ;
I perish, yea, I feel again
Death's icy pangs throughout me crawl,
And his moist teeth in every vein ;
I care not ! so the Race retain
Sweet Beauty, and their sons remain
Godlike, immaculate, and tall.

“ But, sweet and fair and foolish friend
I pray you, cease to worship me,

For in this age my scéptre ends,
And priests who strove tyrannically
To set me where I would not be
Are plunged at last in terror's sea,
And, with a crash, their God descends.

“ Descends ; as Dagon fell of old
In that devout^d dim-lighted hall,
With rustle of jewels and of gold ;
Even so the priestly God shall fall
In their great midmost festival,
And Man shall be the crown of all,
And new sweet blossoms shall unfold

“ Their tender grace before his look ;
Sweet petals, unbeheld before,
Bloom from beside each running brook,
And delicate grasses from the shore,
And stalks and leaves unseen of yore,
That coarser eyes of men ignore,
Now shine by every curve and crook

“ Of the sweet-shining river of Time,
As down its gentle progress comes,
Helped on by many a helpful rhyme,
Not un beholden too, to drums

And swords, and the perplexèd hums
Of armies, and the foam and scums
Of many a yeasty sinful clime ;

“ Bearing upon its bosom all
The mingled ecstasies of life,
The wings that soar, the feet that crawl,
The murderer swaying bloody knife,
The lover, all his senses rife
With pleasure—husband too, and wife,
In tower and cottage, and in hall.

“ Time bears these foaming beads along
Towards the far-sounding purple sea,
Till they unite in ocean’s song,
At last set loose—made clean and free
From personal impurity,
Eager at last to join and be
A sinless and melodious throng.

* * * * *

“ I watch the flowing stream of time,
From Calvary, across the years,
And from my pinnacle sublime
Am cognizant of Death that nears,

But all my individual tears
And hopes and joys and cries and fears
Shall sink—Humanity shall climb,

“ A Saviour new, towards unshaped stars,
Achieving heights I never trode,
Triumphant even in fiercer wars,
Brought nearer to the heart of God
And His sweet passionless abode,
By even a more terrific road,
And sorrow that more sadly mars

“ The forehead of Humanity—
Whose members are as struggling limbs
Whereby the body mounts the tree
Of Progress ; thus the creature climbs,
Till Death inevitable dims
Its brightness, and the glazed eye swims,
And sinews shudder awfully.

“ But yet the Race shall rise again,
As I, its predecessor, rose
From all the torments and the pain,
And bruising agony of blows,
And horror, as of storm-swept snows ;
Follow, fair race, where Jesus goes—
Suffer, to laugh—to live, be slain !”

THE SPIRIT OF BEAUTY.

THE Spirit of Beauty sang to me
A soft ear-clasping strain,
Of moons, of suns, and of the sea,
Of snow-showers and of rain,
Of terror, of strife, and agony,
Of hearts rent, and of pain.

But thro' the song there ran a sense
Of sweet things yet to come,
Beyond our earthly hearing dense,
Of flowers superb with bloom,
Of the overthrow of every fence,
The unfastening of each tomb.

I felt that I could see the whole,
No longer as in part

Seeing—the waves aside did roll
That suffocate the heart
Of mankind ; as a broken bowl
Death did asunder start ;

The wine of life flowed fair and free
From that pale broken glass,
I heard the thunder of the sea,
Drowned mariners did pass
Before my gaze ; they smiled on me
Like flowers that smile in grass.

So these smiled, thro' the herbage rank
Of the slowly-yielding deep,
Slow-climbing from that monstrous tank
Up black cliffs sheer and steep,
Leaving behind their bones that stank,
Bringing only eyes to weep.

I knew them by their eyes that shone
More bright than heretofore,
Although their living flesh was gone,
Left rotting on the shore,
Yea, piled in putrid heaps and wan
Where they were slain of yore.

I knew them by their gleaming eyes,
Still faithfully the same,
And similar yearning looks that rise,
And similar bright flame
Of valour and of enterprise,
That death had failed to tame.

The Spirit of Beauty sang to me
About their various fate,
The solemn secret of the sea
Rang thro' her chant sedate,
I saw that only Purity
Doth ope the heavenly gate.

That only Purity can show
The secrets of all time,
And God's face in a tender glow,
Or awful and sublime
With secrets He alone doth know,
The history of each clime.

The Spirit of Beauty sang to me ;
I listened to her voice,
As to the wind in a tall oak-tree
Bidding the boughs rejoice,
As to the accents maidenly
Of one who makes her choice ;

Her final choice that shall not swerve
For torture, or for death,
For sorrow, or for sundered nerve,
Or what an enemy saith,
Following her love thro' crook and curve
With worshipful fair breath.

The Spirit of Beauty sang to me
As some such maiden's tone,
Or as the whisper of the sea
Towards quiet lovers blown,
Seeming with broad-extended glee
To sanctify their own.

As the sweet power of these sweet things
Sang Beauty to my soul,
Even now her dulcet whisper clings
About me—thro' my whole
Enamoured silent heart it rings,
As then my heart it stole.

Even as whenever music sounds,
Tho' *it* was years ago,
My blood leaps up and throbs and bounds
As once it used to flow
At Love's voice—Love's, that smites and wounds
With many a honeyed blow.

So, at the memory of the song
That Beauty sang to me,
I rise up, renovated, strong
As some fair sapful tree
That hurls its limbs for boughs along,
Erect, and fearlessly.

I know that, tho' the windy years
Make havoc of things frail,
And joys are followed fast by fears
Flying with faster sail,
There comes a time when clouds and tears
Shall have no more avail.

For so the Spirit of Beauty sang,
Sounding from rock and tree,
Such was the prophecy that rang
With dulcet voice on me,
Re-echoing from cliffs that hang
Above the echoing sea.

The Spirit of Beauty gave me hope,
Renewing fair desire ;
For me one day shall sweetly ope
Those purple gates brought nigher,
Towards which, as towards a palace-cope,
I struggle and aspire.

The purple gates that lead to life
Endless, ecstatic, free,—
This shall I enter when death's knife
Is gracious unto me,
Sweet purple gates with voices rife,
As limes with many a bee,

With many a bee in summer—so,
Fair watchers at those gates
Bring tender yearning hearts that glow
With pity, and hope that mates
Their pity—weeping for our woe,
Weeping till this abates.

The Spirit of Beauty sang to me,
I but repeat her song,
Mixed with the murmur of the sea,
And waters rolled along,
And noise of many a murmuring tree,
And rocks, an echoing throng.

It was as if the mingled voice
Of many a sweet-voiced maid
Then sounded, bidding earth rejoice,
And flowers in every glade
Spring forth to gladden each one's choice,
In sunshine or in shade.

I saw the dead begin to move,
I saw their forms awake
On mount, in forest, and in grove,
By many a silent lake,
Their faces all did shine with love
So that I did not quake.

Their faces all were sweet to me,
I recognized my friends,
Some slain in war, some drowned at sea,
Or dying as mostly ends
Frail man ; from under many a tree,
Whose ghostly arch extends

Above their tombs, they rustled forth,
But I was not afraid
Even tho' an ice-blast from the north
Their ice-cold garb conveyed—
I knew these souls were souls of worth,
I should not be betrayed.

Then many more came climbing up,
Faces I did not know,
Some whose cold limbs were sent to sup
On ice-fields and on snow,
Others who perished by the rope,
Or by the red fire's glow.

All were alike, for all were glad ;
They pointed to the lyre
Of Beauty, and not one was sad ;
One similar desire
Pervaded them, one hope they had,
With one mind they aspire,

Desiring to be strings upon
The harp which Beauty plays ;
If over one her white hand shone,
Sweeping in subtle ways
His flowing chords, all pain was gone,
And nought was left but praise.

The Spirit of Beauty sang to me,
And all these souls did shake
With love, like leaves upon a tree,
Or rushes in a brake,
Or the scales that quiver violently
Upon a shining snake.

With love they all did tremble ; she
Swept hand across the chords :
Ah ! had she done that thing to me,
Though fingers were as swords,
For joy I'd perished silently,
Not even with loving words.

Even as a lover, overmuch
Enamoured of his queen,
Awaiteth not her lovely touch
And all her bosom's sheen,
But dieth gazing—even such
Had been my fate, I ween,

Had Beauty further smiled on me,
And given me gifts to hold,
Some rose or lily perhaps that she
Round her bright brow did fold,
Some jewel loosened carelessly,
Or trinket wrought of gold.

But, in that Beauty's song was mine,
She shall herself become,
With bosom smelling of eglantine,
And lips of sweet rose-bloom,
And hands round which white lilies twine,
Beyond the advancing tomb,

Mine wholly : yea, no more in part,
But wholly ; more than we
With straining, feeble, earthly heart
Can yet attain to see,
Beyond the power of poet's art
Is Love as it shall be.

The Spirit of Beauty ends her song,
But something better still
She has given me ; hope ecstatic, strong,
That, doing her sweet will,
I shall not tarry over-long
Before kind love shall kill

My body, and bring my spirit near
To one that never yet,
Through seasons cloudy, seasons clear,
Since first our long gaze met,
Have I ceased sweetly to revere,
And sadly to regret.

MAN'S PROTEST.

AGAINST the God who forged despair and thunder,
I, Man, protest ;
Who gave us love, and hid his poison under
Love's snow-white breast ;
Who gave us life, and cleaves that life in sunder
When it seemeth him best.

I, Man, the lordly spirit of all things,
Thus tortured, wail !
I, Man, the fairest of all tall things
That walk or fly or sail,
Gathering the common outcry of all small things,
With face not pale,

But open and large and as the heaven above me,
Do protest !

Make common cause with Man, all ye who love me ;
 To my breast
Fly, tortured beasts and birds whose pangs do move me ;
 Therein rest.

Yea, rest, and be at peace from all things evil ;
 I, Man, have spoken ;
Fear not the fiery threats of God or devil,
 Christ hath broken
The swords with which the fiends were wont to revel—
 For a token

He hath sent upon me the spirit of Man a power
 To disturb and to defy
The God who slew your spirits till this hour
 With agony,
And bruised the delicate bloom of many a flower
 With thunder from his sky.

He hath sent upon me the spirit of Man a glory
 Unseen before,
Now that the long past ages find me hoary,
 And Time's shore
Lengthens, and all the unceasing human story,
 I pour

Strength endless, courage undivulged upon you—
Prosper, for I
Am mightier than the God that has overthrown you ;
Against his sky,
Whence his storm of thunder and rain has blown you,
I protest, and I cry.

Against a God who tortures human creatures
Without a purpose fair,
Who makes and mars, and makes again their features,
Till they cannot bear
Their own bestowed intolerable natures,
Given for a snare.

Against this God, I, Man, with all my fire
Of spirit, do protest,
Hurling against him from my trembling lyre,
And trembling breast,
The arrows of unutterable desire,
The sounds of an unspeakable unrest.

ODE

ON THE MORNING OF MAN'S NATIVITY.

I.

THIS is the morn, and this the happy hour,
Wherein the soul of Man, enslavèd long,
Bursts from slow bud to final beauty of flower,
With all creation for his harp and song ;
Man, bent, defiled by ages of black wrong,
At length asserts his sweet supremacy,
And takes the lingering sceptre of the earth and sea.

II.

As one before me sang the happy birth
Of Christ, and through long years the sweetest sound
Of Milton's lyre has added tuneful mirth
To Christmas, heard when blazing logs abound,
And blue ice stiffens on the imprisoned ground,

So would I strive to give some voice to Him
Who surely hence shall rule the coming ages dim.

III.

Help me, no fabled muse, but rather Thou,
Swift Spirit of the widening universe,
To accomplish with success my tuneful vow !
Grant me a reed melodious, and terse,
And fragrant, for I hymn no fabled curse,
But rather, from our century's mountain-tops,
Of pleasure do I sing and progress' holy crops.

IV.

I prophesy the end of Christ's fair reign,
I prophesy a fairer, even of Man,
Who, having suffered the collective pain
Of Calvary, and groanèd for a span,
Even since the flood of toilsome life began,
Is risen—and he sits with sceptre sweet
At this our river-fountain, where wide ages meet.

THE HYMN.

I.

O SACRED head of Man,
Defiled for a span,
But risen now, and with new might proceeding
To unbar the ages' doors,
And ope the brazen floors
Wherein the pallid sons of men were bleeding,
Thine is it surely to undo
All fetters, and provide the race with armour new.

II.

For thou, instead of Christ,
Providing a new tryst
In the wide world, but in no local garden,
Shalt bring upon us great
Blessings unseen as yet,
And mysteries of holier life and pardon

Of all the sick ensanguined past,
Bestowing on us gifts that verily shall last.

III.

Full many years ago
He sang of blood and snow,
This poet whom I strive to imitate—
He sang of Christ and tears,
And sorrow of bruised years,
And famished sinners thundering at the gate

Of an exclusive, narrow heaven—
I lead the sinner therein though his crimes be seven.

IV.

I am the clear-voiced bard
Whom no crimes may retard,
Nor any folly, nor cruelty, nor sin,—
My heaven is wrought of God
Who lays aside his rod,
And bids each, even the vilest sinner, in ;

For the slow faiths of previous time
Give place to something greater, holier, more sublime.

V.

Behold, the new Christ stands
At the portal of the lands,
Wreathed not with thorns alone, but also flowers ;
His face not only shines
With tears—he also twines
Around his head the roses of glad hours ;

Behold, he standeth at the gate !
His name is one with Progress, and with Life, and
Fate.

VI.

All life, all knowledge are
Contained in Man's new star,
All shapes, all sweet similitudes of bliss,
With lordly presence he
Shall stride across the sea,
And earth and air and all that therein is ;

The fabled sceptre Jesus held
Descends on sacred Man, by God's design impelled.

VII.

All scientific gain
Is Mankind's to retain,—

All secrets of the unfathomable deep,—
All bounties of the skies
He searches with his eyes,
And marks the young stars when their first limbs leap

With pleasure through the quivering void,
By God's own tender palm benevolently buoyed.

VIII.

All novel thoughts of love
Are Man's, who from above
Draws down the golden chain of progress sweet,
For nothing is exempt
From error, though men dreamt,
As Milton, of a Christ with blameless feet,

And as the Greeks in older times
Recorded perfect gods in smooth, immortal rhymes.

IX.

But let me never swerve,
Sweet Spirit, but with nerve
Clear, and with chant of never-ceasing praise,
Hymn Man, the sacred king,
Whose crown the ages bring,
Whose throne of gold the impetuous ages raise,

At whose divine and untired feet
All forces of the past, and past religions meet.

X.

Let me, with harp untired,
By passionate craving fired,
Resound the great indissoluble name
Of Man, the great new God,
Swordless, nor helm, nor rod
Adding fictitious lustre to his flame,

Nor any fancied virgin's womb
Bestowing on his flesh inexplicable bloom.

XI.

O women ! mothers wronged
By fancies that belonged
To the early Christian undeveloped thought,
How long will ye submit
By bale-fires to be lit,
And into heathen bondage to be brought

By men who prophesy extremes,
And all foul errors meet and bear fruit in their dreams ?

XII.

How long will ye disdain
Man's simple snow-white reign,

And over him the smiling face of God,
The Mother of Mankind,
The Lord of muscle and mind,
Swaying the swinging planets with his nod,

And all desires of temporal things—
How long will ye disdain the faith the sweet age brings?

XIII.

A swordless faith and clear
As waters when the year
Brings back the balmy colouring of June,
As white as evenings when
The moon upon a fen
Sheds down the lustre of a silvery swoon,

As sweet as voices of young girls
Twining among themselves, some brown, some golden
curls.

XIV.

A faith as high as Man
Looms sweetly in the van
Of Progress, and I sing it as I may ;
Tall as the tallest oak,
Whose each successive stroke
Makes feebler creeds and systems that grow grey ;

Whose each successive sturdy blow
Lays many a king and prelate, many a tall tree low.

XV.

O, faith divine and fair,
Now breathing in the air,
Now heard amid the topmasts of the trees,
For thy sake I would die,
O come, sweet, lift me high,
Even with thine own most odorous viewless breeze,

Above the heads of current things
To where the heavenly Love-bird in her freedom sings !

XVI.

Above Life, Time, and Fate,
Towards the heavenly gate
Whereby are clustered all those spirits fair,
From Jesus unto him
Who from our island dim
Caught a rapt sight of azure heavenly air,

And left our island for its sake,
Following that azure sky wherever it might take.

XVII.

From Jesus to that bard
Who fled the ice-blasts hard

Of England, and in azure Italy
Sang things too sweet to tell,
Till those swift breakers fell
Above his head, and hurled his spirit high—

From Christ to Shelley, poets stand
Like stars beside the gates of heaven's starry land.

XVIII.

The faith they preached abides,
Though life's remorseless tides
Do sink the individuals one and all ;
The hope they preached remains,
Emerging from time's stains,
And bearing wings, whereas it did but crawl,

And every century adds thereto
Fresh meaning, and a scope magnificently new.

XIX.

But not the single face
Of any, though his grace
Be ample, and his kingly head be fair,
Shall tarry as a god,
With autocratic nod,
Swinging a devious sceptre in earth's air,

But all shall sink, providing way
For Mankind's rosy sun that ushers in the day.

XX.

Yea, Christ shall sink, that new,
Strong Manhood may bedew
The earth with fragments of divinity :
And therefore in my psalm
The Hebrew's divine calm
I celebrate not, but the struggling knee

Of the collective Man who comes,
Flushed with the gleam of sabres and the glare of drums.

XXI.

For through the foaming time
Man, single and sublime,
Doth struggle with a scarce-emerging head,
Yea, through the swords and gongs,
And red-lipped battle-songs,
And pale-lipped adjuration of the dead—

He comes, he comes, the infant child,
Cradled on waves tempestuous, hushed by storm-blasts
wild !

XXII.

He comes—no shepherds bring
Their bounty, all hearts sing
For joy that he, the Saviour, doth appear,
And some, a few who said
The Man-child was not dead,
When all the cowardly world did quake for fear,

These in the foremost row of saints
Reap joy so wondrous that the joy-struck spirit faints.

XXIII.

Return, ye gods of Greece,
Whom Milton said should cease,
Return, and add your radiance to the new
Glory about to be,
For we have need of ye,
We need your gold-haired beauty to bedew

The quivering cradle wherein lies
The very god ye sought with tears and faint surmise.

XXIV.

The incarnation true,
Not worshipped hitherto,

Of God the motionless and viewless whole ;
 The manifestation fair
 Of God the Lord of air,
And earth, and fire, and all the waves that roll ;

The perfect limitless delight
Of nations, absolute in never-ending might.

XXV.

Fly; not sweet pagan ghosts,
But all ye wandering hosts
Of fancies that around the cradle flew
 Of Christ—miraculous dreams,
 Let in the morning's beams,
Let in the pitiless and searching blue,

Let in the piercing morning air,
Too keen for that past saviour, though his crown be
 fair !

XXVI.

And shudder, not ye sprites
Pagan, but those whose rites
Initiated many a bloody day ;
 Tremble, thou James and Paul,
 Your infant-god shall fall,
Already doth his infant cheek turn grey ;

He owned the stable for one night,
But vanishes before the morning's ruddy light.

XXVII.

The morning comes ! my song
Must cease its current long,
The morning-star is watching at the birth
Of Man, God's complete child ;
I cease my singing wild,
For many a voice with far more potent mirth

Waits to attend the Saviour born
With serviceable reed and a much mellower horn.

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XXVIII.

So ended I—the muse
Said, "Cease not, nor refuse
To celebrate yet further in sweet words
The child whose birth is come
To wake a planet dumb,
And who for victory already girds

Loins mightier than the Christ's who falls,
Liked fabled Lucifer, from heaven's sounding halls.

XXIX.

“Forget not to record
Who perished by the sword,
And who by tongues of pitiless blood-red flame,
For the dear sake of him
Whose clouded face was dim,
And dim the o’ershadowed purport of his aim,

Till, in these days arising, he
With mighty sceptre wields a world-wide sovereignty.

XXX.

“Approach, ye watchers, who
By night, amid the dew,
And hopeless clouds of sorrow and despair,
Watched whether Man might wake,
And braved death for his sake,
And all the swords and weltering fires that were—

Approach ; the tomb is empty now,
Man rises as an eagle o’er a mountain-brow.

XXXI.

“Man rises : he shall pass
Triumphant through the grass

And nettles that surround his lowly grave ;
Not angels, who at first
Christ's victory rehearsed,
Shall flutter round the newly-opened cave,

But souls divine, well-versed in tears,
Who mark with yearning awe the bright shape that
appears.

XXXII.

“ For, though they worshipped long
With sword and prayer and song,
Yet shall they be astonished in the end,
For Man is greater than
The thought that they began,
And every growing vigorous day shall lend

Fresh vigour to his limbs, and grace
More beautiful shall crown his rapid-ripening face.

XXXIII.

“ Take, bard, thy pen and sing
Of this sweet coming thing
When all the lingering meadows shall be green,
For long enough the sound
Of winter without bound,
And dismal cymbals built of ice have been ;

As Christ was born in winter's deep
Man shall in gracious summer issue forth from sleep."

XXXIV.

I heard ; and I resumed
My singing just entombed
Within the sorry marble of fatigue :
I heard ; and took my harp,
Whence notes both sweet and sharp
I bring forth, mixed in a melodious league :

I heard, and gladly do obey,
Hymning again Man's advent and his golden sway.

XXXV.

I glance throughout the world,
Where gradually is furled
The flag of Christ, victorious before ;
I see new martyrs now,
With firm unshaken brow,
By river and by lake and hill and shore ;

Christians, once slain, are slayers, and
Their flag is washed in blood and smeared in many a land.

XXXVI.

Their flag was white before,
But now red currents pour

Their sanguine horror over its white folds,
For priests, with soul perverse,
Have made Christ as a curse,
And fifty curses their foul temple holds,

Therefore their flag is rent asunder,
And all their faces pale before the coming thunder.

XXXVII.

The thunder of new things
Around, and in us, rings,
The heavens are rent, the temple's outer veil
Is torn, the thick clouds break,
On many a hill and lake,
Clear lustrous suns the impurpled past assail ;

The deities of Greece return,
Their bright looks reappear from many a tomb and
urn.

XXXVIII.

Their glad looks reappear,
For in Man's coming year
All truth he recognizes for his own,
Whether in Greece 'twas born,
Or where at early morn
By faint airs the Norwegian pines are blown,

Or where in China's teeming house
Strange yellow-mantled priests and deities carouse.

XXXIX.

All foolish fancies fly
Adown a vaporous sky
That daily groweth clearer and more clear ;
Man bends alone to God,
Not now to any rod
Of Hebrew, whether gentle or austere,

Not now to any Christ or Paul,
For all their golden shrines and silver altars fall.

XL.

Fall, fast as Milton said
The old gods being dead
And vanquished were departing from the earth—
As in his song they wept,
And cruel ashes crept
Across the hearths where deities had birth,

So bitter ashes creep amain
Over the altar-floor where Christ began his reign.

XLI.

The stable is a stall,
And nothing more at all,

His Virgin-mother is a woman pale,
And Christ himself appears,
As the holier Man-child nears,
As fiery genius clad in genius-mail—

And all things take their proper form,
No longer viewed through rifts in superstition's storm.

XLII.

No trembling shepherds now
Perform an early vow,
But, round the cradle of the Saviour, long
Watchers and guards have been,
With rapture in their mien,
And these, instead of that angelic song

Which filled the heavenly stairs let down,
Bring blossoms of their pain well-suited for his crown.

XLIII.

With holy tear-stained bloom
They lingered at his tomb,
While many coarse surrounding soldiers slept,
With sacred tear-stained flowers
They waited, yea, for hours,
Or round his cradle on soft tip-toe crept ;

With joy unstained by tears at last
They greet him in his freedom, sorrow being past.

XLIV.

It is not easy now,
Though I with aching brow
And aching hand and fiery pen should strive
To render this sweet tale,
It is not of avail,
No power hath any bard who is alive

In fullness of fair words to speak
The beauty of the rose upon our infant's cheek.

XLV.

For Christ was but a man,
But our sweet babe began
Before the single, separate birth of races ;
In every woman he
Is manifest, and she
Is but as one of his soft feminine faces ;

All beauty of form, and grace superb,
Is his who rides upon wide life without a curb.

XLVI.

Our limitless desire
We worship in the fire
Of genius, and the beauty of a girl,

We see him manifest
In every sacred breast
Of wifehood, and as sacred virgin's curl ;

Confined not to a man or race,
We worship him revealed as present in each place.

XLVII.

And, seeing that this thing
Approaches with slow wing,
And that it is not manifest as yet,
Save only to the vision
Of souls escaped from prison
Whose longing eyes with love of it are wet,

It is no easy task to say
Words worthy of the ripe, inevitable day.

XLVIII.

But Milton's song was based
On fables undisplaced ;—
He took his flowers of song from plants that filled
His country, and behind
Gleamed stories to his mind,
Whereby the impetuous struggling soul was stilled ;

But, when an epoch gleams in front,
Harder indeed it is to bear the tuneful brunt.

XLIX.

Therefore we wait for some
Great singer who shall come
To set the dawning epoch to a tune
Sublime as Milton's, when
With power of singers ten
He set to melody the sinking moon

Of Christendom—but now the sun
Demands a novel lyre for brilliance begun.

L.

So, dawning era, take
My spirit for thy sake
Faint with the love that finds no words to speak ;
Destroy me, but bring nigh
The happy time that I
Seeing, declare with diction hoarse and weak ;

I love thee ; let some singer give
My love a fitting voice in verses meet to live.

FROM A POET MILITANT TO MAZZINI
TRIUMPHANT.

I.

At last, our brother, thou hast left the land
Of trouble and of sorrow and dismay,
And joined thy harp to the ecstatic band
Whose voices and whose glad lyres sing alway
In regions where God's presence is as day ;
The countenance beloved on earth by souls
Who fought for hope, for freedom, and the grey
And reverend city by which Tiber rolls,
Now vanishes with tears from earthly lists and scrolls.

II.

Would that I had the notes of Shelley, and
The organ-voice of Milton, and his sight
Nurtured on heavenly visions sweet and grand,

The more so for the absence of the light
Common, with which the common earth is dight ;
Would that I had the voices of all singers,
And all their palms, and robes of lustrous white,
That I might fit the chant that in me lingers
To words less weak and frail, with more auspicious fingers !

III.

Would that I had the reed whose swift point sang
Of paradise, and heaven's heights, and of hell,
From which the immortal soul of the era rang ;
For, truly, things as great are ours to tell,
With whom in these last ages it is well,
Yea, things as vast to sing with a sonorous
And wide-mouthed trump, or softly-cadenced shell—
The beauty of the mother-age that bore us,
And many a flaming star borne perilously o'er us.

IV.

For inspiration is not dead ; it seeks
The worthy presence of a worthy bard,
Then with a glorious rose inflames his cheeks ;
He cometh ; but the slow time doth retard
His labour, and surrounding ice is hard
For any, even a trumpet-blast to melt,
And barriers interpose, not built of card,

And in the midway iron blows are dealt,
And many iron shocks that singer shall have felt.

V.

The singer whom we see not, but who stands
Most surely at the gateway of the time,
With risen power upon immaculate hands,
And all a sun's fresh brilliance in his rhyme ;
Loud as the thunder in its organ-chime,
Yet soft as the sweet speaking of a girl
Fed upon fairy-tales and lore sublime,
Who laughs, sweet-shaking many a-golden curl,
At dexterous fairy-tales of palaces of pearl.

VI.

So sweet and yet so strong shall be the diction
Of the great singer soon about to be ;
He shall disdain the haunts of ancient fiction,
And ancient iron-armoured revelry,
And tales of knights who struggled knee to knee,
For he shall mark before him in the fighting
Of the wide peoples, and the foaming sea
Of present thought, a subject grand, delighting
His fiery spirit, all the paler epochs blighting.

VII.

Casting himself with faith and sweet persuasion
Into the yeasty channel of our days,
And seizing each fair opportune occasion,
He shall achieve as bright a crown of bays,
With as divine a worship of those sprays,
As any who in previous epochs drew
The people with the fervour of their lays ;
Laurels at these the lavish people threw—
But his crown shall be filched from heaven's starry blue.

VIII.

And thou, Mazzini sweet, hast paved the way !
Saint John thou art to this fair coming bard,
Singing with blameless heart thy prose-clad lay.
Him all the icy seasons do retard,
The spring breathes feebly, and Earth's frost is hard ;
Our glad inwreathed Redeemer comes not yet,
Anointed with fresh flowers and spikenard ;
By no green hill-side may his steps be met,
His footstep presses not the wandering mignonette.

IX.

But, our Mazzini, thou hast made the path
Easier, for where thy lonely soul hath bled,

Pierced either by false friends' or prelates' wrath,
Soft flowers, impurpled with that living red,
Along the lonely way a radiance shed,—
Where thou hast groaned, birds have caught up the note
And hurl it transformed round about the head
Of one who, following with swift soul, doth float
Along the self-same way as in pursuing boat.

X.

Easier it is for Christ, O great Saint John,
When comes the approaching Healer of our age,
To put his healing store of garments on,
And open out a less tempestuous page
Of Being ;—thou, interpreter and sage,
Hast gone before, and all the path is ready,
And the fierce elements less madly rage,
And less oppressive is the devious eddy
Of priestcraft, and the true stand stronger and more
steady.

XI.

Therefore we worship with religious awe,
Mazzini, thy fair spirit, that has past
The wood-side beyond which man never saw.
We cannot follow yet ; desire is fast,

Both fleet of foot and wing, but Earth's sad blast
Has yet to be endured a little season,
A little longer with faint fluttering mast
Life's vessel 'mid this elemental treason
Surges and toils, perhaps for some sufficient reason.

XII.

But, happy soul, it is not so with thee ;
Thy strife is ended, and thy banner waves
Beyond that bitter, foam-encircled sea ;
Beyond the cold domain of clay and graves,
Thou art, and all thy spoken message saves,
Even as the Comforter from Christ was sent
To comfort those who, hidden in black caves
And gruesome forests, by fierce anguish rent,
Held to the blood-stained road by which their Master
went.

XIII.

That glorious season doth return to us,
And, as the first brave Christians did endure
The rack, the thumb-screw, and the bloody truss,
With simple hearts that perished for the pure,
So, in this unreturning age, be sure,
The thumb-screws and the tortures of sharp words,
Misunderstanding too that doth obscure

The faces even of friends, and many herds
Of sufferings strange, await the hero whose hand girds

XIV.

His loins to run a novel torch-lit race ;
And, first of these new martyrs, with white brow,
Sacred Mazzini, in the foremost place,
With white, immaculate attire, art thou,
Keeping a sacred and unspotted vow—
That thou wouldst give thyself to Italy,
The fairest fruit of many a fragrant bough
Which now doth seek the freshly opened sky,
Wherethrough the winds of new and better hope do fly.

XV.

What shall I say? What words are built of fire,
To express the living spirit that I feel?
Take me with living blast of strong desire,
So that, alive, as a dead man might reel,
Or as the golden-handled stars do wheel
Their bodies in the midst of flaming heaven,
I turn sick at the force of that appeal,
And struggle to escape this fleshy leaven,
By purple teeth of red, ensanguined terror driven!

XVI.

I sink, I fail, my speechless voice is dumb—
As the white moon that wanders from afar,
Filling the skies with silvery flame and bloom,
Then sinking with a slow diminished car,
Made like the lustre of a large faint star,
Till all the heavens are blue and shine no longer,
Divided by that gleaming snow-white bar,
And, lastly, ruddy day is proved the stronger ;
So do I disappear, a paltry verbiage-monger.

XVII.

But, none the less, with soft love that is mute
As woman when she sees her lover near,
Let me upon my heart's interior flute
Sing to thee ceaselessly, Mazzini dear,
Who, when the age was sick and shook for fear,
With strong hand didst usurp the kingly sway,
And gavest us sight of summer for a year ;
But now, with thee, the summer is away,
And all Time's skies are mournful, overcast and grey.

XVIII.

Thou art gone where peace and summer are abiding,
Not, as with us, exceptional good things,

But, where thou art, sweet streams are alway gliding,
And with sweet voices the rapt woodland rings ;
With thee the Love-bird in clear freedom sings ;
There are not any fetters, no, nor sorrow,
Nor iron eagles with remorseless wings,
Nor need a man in terror dread to-morrow,
Each coming day fresh sheen of rose-red hope shall
borrow.

XIX.

So is it with thee, but with us the labour
Of imminent and sad things presses hard,
But here and there, with scanty stroke of tabour
Struggles some versatile, ambitious bard
To advance the epoch that our sins retard,
As I do struggle—and the wild wind blows
My numbers, rent like palaces of card,
Into a dismal place made white with snows,
And what is pent within no woman-spirit knows.

XX.

But through the sorrow, brother, thou hast journeyed ;
Harder than I fight hath thy spirit fought,
With actual steel lances thou hast tourneyed,
Into which conflict I have not been brought,
Yet all the horror of lonely tears and thought

Is not a small thing, is it, brother mine ?

These present birth-pangs, are they all for nought ?
Or shall I, at mine own life's ending, twine
Sweet laurels of glad victory, perfect even as thine ?

XXI.

This, this we know, that one of us emerges
With triumph from the terror and the pangs
Of life, even as a diver from thick surges
Is risen,—while his iron armour clangs
Around him, and, complacent, he harangues
His fellows, telling of the deep mid-ocean,
And rocky hollows, and of sharks' keen fangs,
And scarlet sea-flowers in melodious motion,
Illustrating his search with many a fruitful notion.

XXII.

So, from the horrors of the trembling deep
Mazzini rises into heavenly air,
And regions wherein yet we may not peep,
But which, we are sure, are exquisitely fair ;
To risen souls he recounts many a lair
Of pain and horror in our earth behind,
So that they stand with horror-stricken hair
Around him, as with ears half deaf, and blind,
He emerges from the ocean, resolute of mind.

XXIII.

Fair risen spirits round him stand ; as many
Have watched a drowned man convoyed from the deep,
Who, eager, mark the surgeons, if, perhaps, any
May rouse him from that temporary sleep,
And, as with pulse and throb the slow limbs leap
To life renewed, their joy is so exceeding
That even hardy mariners do weep—
So, not without tears doth Mazzini bleeding
Emerge from life's wild breakers round his body speeding.

XXIV.

To all the prophets great who went before
He is united, being perfect now ;
To Milton, who illumined England's shore
With light that wandered from his darkened brow
To illume a wider field ; to all who vow
Their lives to freedom ; most of all to those
Who guided through the waters the sweet prow
Of Italy, sweet vessel yclept the " Rose,"
Fair as a woman, white as woman's breast of snows.

XXV.

To Shelley, and to him whom Shelley mourned
In that most tuneful of all elegies,

Is our Mazzini's snow-white soul returned,
Even as a lark reseeks the voiceless skies
From which he fell, with fresh soliloquies ;
Shelley and Adonais are together ;
Each to outsing the other softly tries,
Like throistles vying in uncertain weather,
Straining the yellow root of every puffed-out feather.

XXVI.

But most of all to Christ, I see him draw,
With similar heroic outlook near,
I mark their meeting, but with sacred awe,
And somewhat in me yet of earthly fear,
I do retreat from words I may not hear ;
Not otherwise than as a woman who
Will not, with brain less ample, interfere
Seeing her husband holding converse due
With some large-brained friend, but meekly leaves the
two.

XXVII.

These prophets speak together of approaching
Beauty of life, and hope of novel things ;
Strange subjects and remote disclosures broaching.
They talk of over-burthened crests of kings,
And how God's Love-bird in her pleasure sings ;

They talk of new grand unions of the nations,
And peace the coming blood-red epoch brings,
And giant arms of grand confederations,
Hurling aside the church and all her spent damnations.

XXVIII.

Their faces are too bright for me to see
Without the cover of a kindly veil
An angel flings in pity unto me ;
But none the less they bid my singing hail,
And greet me, sick with ecstasy and pale,
As in some feeble sort a fellow-fighter,
Pierced by the horror of earth's lonely wail ;
As one who struggles if he may make lighter
The burthen of the earth, and make her body brighter.

XXIX.

They speak of poets ; and a vision flits
Before me of earth's circle of pure bards,
Who, with impetuous spear-points of sharp wits,
Do speed the pleasure that slow fate retards ;
Building with bright, imaginative cards
The temples of the future, and gilt houses,
And brilliant markets, and triumphal yards,
Wherein the Future's gladsome toil carouses ;
Before my face I see robes, mantles, sceptres, blouses.

XXX.

The various labour of the future streams,
In one grand vision clear, before my gaze,
No longer as the food for idle dreams,
But radiant with immeasurable blaze
Of truth ; in delicate, astounding ways,
The mantle of the future is unfolded.

I mark each forehead sacred with the bays,
And every brow by kingly purpose moulded,
Each heart by sorrow's swords or nails of misery scolded.

XXXI.

I see the hope of every patriot finished,
The dream of every sorrowing bard complete ;
The altar of Earth's prayers is undiminished,
But each petition, with exalted feet,
Has sought the inmost chamber-hollows sweet
Wherein God sits to answer ; He doth spurn
No single flame of sacrificial heat ;
He gathers all our words into an urn
Whence presently our hope shall magnified return.

XXXII.

God gathers all our hearts into his bosom ;
They rise like scentless lilies wan and pale ;

He doth return them as the blood-red blossom
Of some superb rose that might proudly sail
Upon a woman's breast ; our mingled wail
Is melody if heard from out the sky,
Even from behind the Holy Temple's vail,
Whereto thro' paths of misery we fly,
Ascending to our homes, God's palaces on high.

XXXIII.

So much I learned ; but then the Italian vision
Of joy and beauty on my spirit broke ;
As the green earth doth bound from winter's prison,
Spurning with laughter every icy yoke,
A liberated universe then spoke ;
I marked the re-united shores of nations ;
The passion of the re-united folk
Brought incense and immaculate oblations
Of fruitful hearts to God as happy protestations.

XXXIV.

The sounds of prayer were common ; yet no churches
Usurped the grim protection of a creed ;
The wings of white prayers fluttered through the birches,
And pure petitions gambolled in each mead ;
No longer do our poet-martyrs bleed,

For truth is worshipped, revered everywhere.

The Spirit of Truth doth calmly take the lead,
All hearts are free as freest mountain-air,
All souls of men are white, made exquisitely fair.

XXXV.

And, fairest of all lands, I saw thine own,
Mazzini, rising softly from the waste
Of many a scattered church and vanquished throne ;
Like some pure island on the waters placed
By hands of a creating God in haste
Thy country gleamed, superb with many towers,
Grand with the endless city that hath graced
The avenues of Time, and furnished flowers
Of beauty to adorn the universe's bowers.

XXXVI.

At last, Mazzini, thou art understood !
Thy passion, and thy valour, and thy love.
Thou art not veiled with any paltry hood ;
Thy spirit, rich with presence of the Dove
Of Holiness, is visible above
The Rome that shall be ; therein thou art praised
By every free-born poet who doth move
Numbers majestic with delight ; high raised
Thou art where once the fires of persecution blazed.

XXXVII.

We pray thee, help us ; we are puzzled sorely,
Hard bound by clanking fetters of the age,
We struggle, we aspire, succeeding poorly,
Down-stricken by the adamantine rage
Of elements we know not how to assuage ;
But thou art treading some soft, flowery mead,
Or turning some fresh philosophic page
Of heavenly knowledge ;—help our souls in need ;
Be present as a god to save and intercede.

XXXVIII

Be present with us ; let thy trusty spirit
Visit not only Italy, thine own,
But do thou, in sweet sympathy, inherit
Salt shores by alien, fiercer breezes blown,
Inhabited by tribes of hoarser tone ;
Our England gave thee refuge ; guide us on
Through struggle, sorrow, and collective groan ;
Until our great contentment shall have shone,
And we may reach the country whither thou art gone.

XXXIX.

Our England boasts a noble race of singers,
Our England in the time that doth draw near,—

The age that shall be present, tho' it lingers,
Making away with every sword and sneer,
And doubtful, sick presentiment of fear,
Shall play a noble part ; her bards shall speak
The *spring-tide* message of the worldly year,
As from some pale, prophetic mountain-peak,
Upon the which they wait with countenances meek.

XL.

The *summer* of the planet shall be sounded
From Italy—thy land, thy love, thine own ;
Thy love that soared, exceeded, and abounded,
Shall be re-gathered into richer tone
When Italy's red, liberal rose is blown,
For great Italian poets shall arise
Even sweeter than the flute of Dante flown
Towards flowery hollows of celestial skies ;
Great prophets of intense, unfathomable eyes.

XLI.

The spirit of Italy shall find a measure,
The summer of the future shall pervade
The land God granted as a perfect treasure
Of sunlight to the lands he set in shade ;
By river and by sunny nook and glade

The triumphs of Italia shall be counted,
Like some white-breasted, flower-engirdled maid,
Upon the white steed of her freedom mounted,
She shall be seen ; the fangs of priestcraft shall be
blunted.

XLII.

The central God shall speak through many voices,
Through women, and through young men, or a child;
When all the fragrant bridal-room rejoices,
Rich with faint perfumes as of roses piled,
Or savours of broad meadows undefiled,
God shall be there ; and every bride shall know it,
Revealing God's breast in her bosom mild,
Not needing an inspired high-priest to show it,
Nor any voice of sage, nor word-revolving poet.

XLIII.

O grand Mazzini, such a season waits us ;
I see it dimly, and I strive to sing
The coming pleasurable time that mates us
To this divine soul of a lovely thing ;
Already do the buds of roses cling
To the sweet casement, all the buds are swelling,
The fields are laden with the odorous spring,

And, in accordance, I would be foretelling
Love's spring in numbers sweet most softly upward
welling.

XLIV.

The hyacinths will soon bedeck the corners
Of many a happy and most fragrant wood ;
Why should the sons of men be perjured mourners,
When blossoms, rich for many a bridal rood,
Join happy voices in their solitude ?
Self-sacrifice provides to human sorrow
A key, and this was thy perpetual mood,
And therefore do we softly seek to borrow
At thy most sacred tomb gifts fitted for the morrow.

XLV.

We do not wait to see thy body rise,
As once disciples lingered at a tomb,
With mournful tear-drops in their down-cast eyes,—
We do not look to see the perfect bloom
Of risen Mazzini issue from the gloom,
As once those Hebrews said that Jesus walked
From spent hell-fires that struggled to consume,
In vain, the gentle hands and voice, that talked
So softly—Satan's sting immeasurably balked !

XLVI.

We do not look to see our hero enter,
With visible body, a rent heaven of blue,
Dividing as an arrow swift the centre
Of that stupendous azure dome we view,
Cleaving its sounding hollows through and through
With dazzling wings of passionate intention,
And pearly radiance and impurpled hue.
We spoil not God's pale beauty by invention
Of richer dyes ; we choose a *white rose* for our mention.

XLVII.

The cheeks of Death are white ; that pale rose hovers
Softly upon the features of the dead,
Softly upon pale women who had lovers,
Whose cheeks were once thrice kissed to roses red,
Whose lips with crimson loveliness once bled ;
Death's white flower covers these with tender petals,
Above the rich departing crimson shed ;
And we—we seek not with invention's nettles
To spoil the eternal peace God's hand eternal settles.

XLVIII.

God places on the dead his solemn palm,
As a white, pure, imperishable rose,

Imperishable in a fragrant calm ;
And we—we strive not madly to unclothe
The petals that his tender hands dispose
Upon the corpse, august in its new sleep ;
But over it God's sacred blossom blows,
And unintelligible tears we weep,
But not for sorrow, no, for something e'en more deep.

XLIX.

For Death is unto us as something deeper,
More holy than it seemed to men before ;
The dead man is a voluntary sleeper
Upon God's breast—we cannot, as of yore,
A risen, pallid Lazarus implore,
But rather, with a love too deep for words,
The quiet dust to quiet dust restore,
Knowing that our departed labourer girds
His loins to toil afresh 'mid sinless, happy herds

L.

Of God's quick creatures, in some sinless mansion,
It may be 'mid the measureless white air,
Or in some vast, ecstatic brain-expansion
Of all the slow yet wondrous powers that were,
Tedious to him, yet excellently fair

With due regard to whence he, perhaps, had risen
As from a dark and mist-clothed valley-lair
Into a mountain-ether ; from a prison,
Unto a palace steps each man, from fate to vision.

LI.

But into higher regions steps the dead :—
And thither, O our Leader, thou art gone,
With sacred, unpolluted human head ;
Beyond Death's mountains a new sun has shone,
Tipping the previous summits faint and wan
As with a light insufferably pure :
O brother, has not some pure-breasted swan
Of soft Italian loveliness been sure
At last to heal the soul that nobly did endure.

LII.

Upon the earth thou wast a lonely man,
Thou art not, I am certain, lonely now.
A solitary honour is the van
Of battle, or of thought ! a lonely brow
For certain that which doth allegiance vow
To purposes unfathomed by the frail
And fickle herd, who understand not how
One passion, vast, imperishable, pale
With its most intense life, may garb a man in mail.

LIII.

Driving him surely from the grassy meadows
Of daisy-flecked, harp-haunted common life,
Towards the mute and scentless mountain-shadows :
Towards some unsearchable, sequestered strife;
So that he severs with religious knife
The bonds that tie him to the common soul,
For *his* soul with a secret voice is rife,
And o'er his spirit secret whispers roll,
Urging him fiercely on towards many a viewless goal.

LIV.

But, brother, I am certain that the passion,
Pent-up, misunderstood, imprisoned long,
Has mixed, in some celestial, fearless fashion,
With the soft music of a woman's song ;
Thine heart of love was tender, yet most strong,
But it was wholly given to Italy—
Or so it seemed to us—but we were wrong !
Some personal passion thou shalt surely see,
Who didst on earth adore, demanding no soft fee.

LV.

The sacred kiss of Italy, most pleasant,
Is printed on thy dead, heroic brow,

But with some perfect spirit thou art present,
Some soft embodiment of Italy, now,
Who shall reward thee—ah ! we know not how,
Being with remnants of the body blind ;
Some woman, the fruition of thy vow,
Thy purest manhood shall most surely find,
In whom Italia's self shall, visibly, be kind.

THE OLD AND THE NEW.

“CHRIST being raised, dieth no more”—
Henceforth Venus is pale,
And stripped is her snow-white mail ;
As a sea-bird's her faint wail
Resounds thro' the mists of the shore.

“Christ being raised, dieth no more”—
Out of the ashes of Rome
Rises a new tall dome ;
The peoples shall make it their home,
Not wreathed with trophies of war.

“Christ being raised, dieth no more”—
Trample the blossoms of Greece,
Their poets and heroes shall cease,
But praise we our Lord of Peace,
The deep-browed king we adore.

“Christ being raised, dieth no more”—
Watchers that tarried beheld,
On golden pinions impelled,
Christ's figure—death being quelled,
Quelled was their misery sore.

“Christ being dead, liveth no more”—

Venus from out of the deep
Risen is, risen from sleep ;
Take courage, ye that weep,
For her face shines over the shore.

“Christ being dead, liveth no more”—

Out of that Hebrew dead
Rises a banneret red ;
The peoples have travailed and bled ;
Our Mars shall initiate war.

“Christ being dead, liveth no more”—

Praise we rather our sages'
Who inscribed fathomless pages
For a gift and a light to the ages ;
Their calm-browed strength we adore.

“Christ being dead, liveth no more”—

Watchers that wait at the grave
Of our goddess, see plumes wave
In the mouth of that desolate cave ;
And their souls are no more sore.

“ Christ being raised, dieth no more ”—
Praise we, in hymn and in song,
Jesus, his sword-arm strong ;
Approach we, a jubilant throng,
Low bending Christ’s altar before.

“ Christ being raised dieth no more ”—
The storm of the terror of God
As lightning leaps on the sod,
But he guides his lambs with a rod
Gentle, as ever of yore.

“ Christ being raised, dieth no more ”—
As a King, as a Monarch, He stands
On a golden throne ; He disbands
Past sorrows and sins of the lands,
Peace, bounty, and love to outpour.

“ Christ being raised, dieth no more ”—
What is beauty but clay,
Created but for a day,
In a feeble, mutable way ?
Frail oaths their goddess swore.

“ Christ being dead, liveth no more ”—

From the snow-white calm of her breast

Flies healing for spirits opprest ;

’Tis a home, a temple, a nest,

For nations homeless before.

“ Christ being dead, liveth no more ”—

Gone is the terror that slew,

And our Lady, alive and new,

Shines as a bird in the blue,

Shines, as she glistened of yore.

“ Christ being dead, liveth no more ”—

Gleameth upon us the beauty

Of Venus, our joy and our booty

Spotless ; hers is our duty,

And service of praise we outpour.

“ Christ being dead, liveth no more ”—

Beauty is endless ; Christ

With death-worms holds fair tryst ;

Death’s beetles his body enticed—

Now, where is that oath which he swore ?

“ Christ being raised, dieth no more ”—
He, the Lamb that was killed,
O'er tribes converted and thrilled
Shall rule ; Death fled when he willed,
As a fawn at a lion's roar.

“ Christ being raised dieth no more ”—
Shines the dawn of a year
Sinless, redemption is near ;
For seasons hoary and drear,
Soft summer flames at the door.

“ Christ being raised, dieth no more ”—
Zeus and Here are white
With extreme terror and affright ;
As moons sink swallowed in night,
They sink ; our Sun doth soar.

“ Christ being raised, dieth no more ”—
Fame is of little account,
To a lordlier life we mount,
To a crystal ceaseless fount,
All worldly yearning is o'er.

“ Christ being dead, liveth no more ”—
Christ as a lamb shall flee
When his trembling gaze doth see
Our leopard’s approaching knee ;
When he hears her full throat roar.

“ Christ being dead, liveth no more ”—
Summer is in the smile
Of beauty ; their swords do defile
Our goddess, their leaders beguile
Our people ; Death treads at the door.

“ Christ being dead, liveth no more ”—
But for a season He
With red, vindictive knee,
Doth triumph violently ;
For a time his red wings soar.

“ Christ being dead, liveth no more ”—
Sweet are the limbs of a girl,
Sweet is each golden curl
Her fingers lazily twirl,
And bosom her hands pass o’er.

“Christ being raised, dieth no more”—
Nymphs and goddesses nude
Are abolished, broken, subdued ;
The unseemly shapes they viewed
We hurl in haste to the floor.

“Christ being raised, dieth no more”—
Roses are but for an age
Thoughtless, we turn Time’s page ;
Heavenly flowers engage
Our vision—these Christ wore.

“Christ being raised, dieth no more”—
Praise we Christ, who is strong,
And his sword, keen-edged, is long ;
His heart is as sweet as a song,
And as soft as a kiss to the core.

“Christ being raised, dieth no more”—
Ours are the golden hills
Of Heaven, and amber rills
Whose bed no torrent fills,
And gifts from the heavenly store.

“ Christ being dead, liveth no more ”—
Kissed by the foam-flakes, our
Immaculate foam-born flower
Steps, under a foam-bell shower,
With white foot over the floor.

“ Christ being dead, liveth no more ”—
Nay ! there is many a crown ;
Fame puts smooth bay-leaves down ;
The forehead that knows no frown
Love’s earliest rose-buds wore.

“ Christ being dead, liveth no more ”—
Truth ! their masculine kiss
Is but as a serpent’s hiss
By beauty’s sweet-mouthed bliss—
Her mouth is sweet to the core.

“ Christ being dead, liveth no more ”—
Ours are flowery glades
Upon earth, and cool, deep shades
Of beeches, and bright-browed maids—
All earth’s kindly store.

“ Christ being raised, dieth no more ”—
He is risen, and Summer, on wings
Rose-white, rises and sings ;
All good gifts he brings,
All high hopes to the fore.

“ Christ being raised, dieth no more ”—
Surely Jehovah is here
In this peasant’s figure austere ;
To the Lord Judæa is dear,
And earth’s plains snowy and hoar.

“ Christ being raised, dieth no more ”—
Listen ! our sages speak
With rose-flushed, passionate cheek,
Yet are they gentle and meek,
Christ’s sweet evangelists four.

“ Christ being raised, dieth no more ”—
Surely we trust in the face
Of Jesus ; our hands we place
Round the body that, by God’s grace,
The spotless Virgin bore.

“ Christ being dead, liveth no more ”—

She is risen ! Lady sweet,

Trample with pitiless feet

Our bodies ; but, we entreat,

Bring lovely days to the fore.

“ Christ being dead, liveth no more ”—

Beauty is in all places

And persons, and various races ;

Sweet summer her white breast graces,

She crowneth the groves that are hoar.

“ Christ being dead, liveth no more ”—

Beauty's evangelists fair

Are fire, and water, and air,

And this sweet earth ; we are 'ware

Of these, her spirits four.

“ Christ being dead, liveth no more ”—

Safely we trust in thee ;

For meadow, and mountain, and lea,

And blue, dim wastes of the sea,

Thine endless bosom bore.

SONNETS.



ENGLAND TO ITALY.

[England's Charge to Italy on sending Keats, her well-loved son, thither for the restoration of his health, and Italy's answer. Written after reading Wordsworth's sonnet on the departure of Sir Walter Scott for Naples.]

ITALIA ! Sister ! to thy tender charge
With confidence I give my poet child ;
Our winds and strenuous waves were all too wild
For him—his spirit lingers on the marge
Of icy death—approach, swift-footed barge,
And bear him o'er the waters undefiled,
To regions where perpetual Sol has smiled ;
Let peace be his, and restoration large.

Then let him with a vigorous step re-seek
The barrier of my iron-girdled shore,
Sweet-voiced as ever, but no longer weak,—
Singing from lustier throat than heretofore,—
With soft Italia's bloom upon his cheek ;
Be speedy, sail, and smite the furrows, oar !

ITALY TO ENGLAND.

HE was too fair ! I loved him overmuch.
Sweet sister, is it altogether ill
That he no more can feel the wintry chill,
No more be pierced by sorrow's icy touch ?
That he has, once for all, escaped the clutch
Of poverty and loneliness and scorn,
And that another poet has been born
Into Elysian fields, made fair with such ?

I laid a tender hand upon his head—
Alas ! the love and passion in it slew ;
Now is he numbered with the gifted dead,
Whose wings divide the unfathomable blue
Of my bright heaven ;—and their fame is shed
Upon me in remembrance ever new.

FROM BLACKHEATH TO GRAVESEND.

Suggested by Wordsworth's Series of Sonnets on the River Duddon.

I JOURNEYED by wild marshes yesterday,
Where lonely bands of wandering cattle fed,
With here and there a straw-stack or a shed,
And all the skies were overhung with grey ;
It was a dismal region, yet I say
That many swift and pleasing fancies sped
Throughout me, nor was rapture wholly dead ;
No lack of colour poesy can slay.

In that dim waste I seemed to apprehend
A spirit present, lordly and as fair
As any whose bright sceptre doth extend
Thro' viewless avenues of mountain air,
Or over slopes where clustering birches bend,
And many a scudding goshawk finds his lair.

2.

Since not in mountain-regions I was born,
But by the silver bank of gliding Thames,
Where many an iron steamer duly stems
The current, somewhat have I of high scorn
For singers who can only sound their horn
In lofty regions, where the sun begems
Cold mountain-tops—whose blazing diadems
From lustrous scenes of easy thought are torn.

The grandeur of a mountain, who denies?
Grant *me* the patient insight, heavenly muse,
To own thy sacred presence 'mid dim skies,
And low surrounding flats of slime and ooze
O'er which the wandering love-sick plover flies,
Tender with uniformity of hues.

3.

O mountain-regions, stately and exalt,
Am I then false and treacherous to you,
Your perfectly transparent skies of blue,
Your grand rock-masses woven of basalt,
And precipices where the wild birds halt
With some more daring, giddier flight in view,
And nooks where birches cluster two and two,
And verdant sheen of many a mossy vault?

Not so ! but one has sung you whom to attempt
To rival were a folly—as for me,
From giddy mountain-eulogies exempt,
Let me the rather seek the still grey sea,
And rivers as the river where I dreamt
But yesterday, my vanished love, of thee.

4.

For not the mountains, not the lordly void
Of untempestuous and ecstatic air
That finds 'mid those high summits cool and fair
A resting-place and temple unalloyed,
Not these allure me—nor, by these decoyed,
Do I forget, sweet muse, my native lair—
The home, still more significant, of her
By whose sweet face my fainting youth was buoyed.

Amid the marshes spreading towards the deep,
By Woolwich and by Gravesend, with the power
Of coming ocean-life upon their sleep,
I still can linger many a happy hour,
And many a happy silent watch can keep,
Happier than in a fern-clad mountain bower.

5.

The great ships steal along—I muse, I think
Of wonders that their keels shall soon traverse ;

I mark the mariners our islets nurse,
Clustered in gazing circles on the brink
Of pier and shore, watching slow topmasts sink,
As many a hardy story they rehearse ;
Waste regions I divide with fancy terse,
And unintelligible joys I drink.

The spirit of the universe is mine,
Perhaps most of all in such a quiet scene,
Where floating logs along the river line
Give motion to an endless waste serene,
And here and there black rocking boats combine
To hint at life that elsewhere had not been.

6.

Steal on, slow circles of the eddying river,
Climb on, swift prows of sharp ascending boats !
I mark ye, and I mark each straw that floats
Upon the waves, and sun's red rays that quiver
Thro' the dense air of afternoon, and shiver
Across my searching gaze like lustrous motes ;
Each item of the view my outlook notes,
From the long hills to flats that ebb for ever.

But now the robe of evening mist descends,
The river groweth darker, and the tides

Are less apparent, as their outset blends
With the green shore's remote inclosing sides,
And with the closing day my spent lyre ends,
And this faint tune its passionate love provides.

7.

But, O ye solemn mountains, loved of him
Who most of all has stood with accents pure
Among our recent bards whose songs endure,
Who now sits 'mid the winged seraphim
With harp not weary and with eyes not dim,
And lips no earthly sickness can obscure,
Sweet mountains, be not wroth with me,—be sure
With love of ye my looks do oftentimes swim.

But in that I was born in lowly lands,
And in a lowly region sought my bride,
These speak to me as no man understands,—
And, with unearthly mystic power supplied,
I seem to tread the desolate reach of sands,
And mark the low waste washing of the tide.

ABBAY WOOD.

BRIGHT hill-sides, covered thick with yellow heads
Of daffodils—a primrose here and there,
The subtle smell of spring-time in the air,
A brimstone-plumaged butterfly who speeds
On wings ecstatic thro' the shining meads,
As if a flying daffodil it were,
A distant prospect sweet beyond compare,
Showing the silver Thames amid its reeds.

Such was the scene that met our earnest gaze,
O Violet, when we rested on the hill,
Marking the slow departure of the haze
From valley, upland, and meandering rill,
A prospect whose pure soothing presence stays
Within me as a sunny comfort still.

2.

I felt the sweet sense of the spring-time steal
Throughout me, renovating every nerve ;
I marked the distant river's every curve,
And the far echo of a church-bell's peal ;
As we were making our sequestered meal,
With appetites the forest airs did serve—
Upon a neighbouring bark with cunning swerve
A creeper* climbed and twisted, wheel on wheel.

The silence and the pleasure of the place
Pervaded us—we could not but be sure
That here was manifest the perfect grace
Of Beauty, and her bosom soft and pure,
And the exceeding grandeur of her face :
The eyeless, smoke-fed city ceased to allure.

3.

But, chiefly, I was startled by a sense
Of what a wondrous pleasure it would be
To glide, soft-footed, thro' that grove we see,
Dividing the fir thickets tall and dense,
When the bright sun of morning shone intense,
With perfect-bosomed Love beside of me,
The early dawn illumining each tree,
And every leaf and flower and dark grey fence.

* The bird (*Certhia familiaris*)—not the plant.

I seemed to hear the gentle feet of Love
 Upon the mossy, sun-illumined floors,
And felt that 'twas a pleasure far above
 The passion of the painted corridors
Of theatres, to traverse, like a dove,
 Dawn's beauty on those leafy forest-shores.

BLOOD-DROPS.

TO MY BEAUTY.

Rosy petals, red as blood,
Towards my lady's sweet abode,
In a trembling hand I bring—
Piercing all my heart, I sing.
Musically, blood-drops fall,
And I gather.....gather.....all,
Placing them within a cup,
That therein my sweet may sup,
And be so fulfilled of me,
In a vision verily.
Gleams of roses, passing red,
I bestow around her bed,
Gleams of roses, passing fair,
Fragrant as with summer air,
Dipped in crimson, grand attire,
Face-flushed with poetic fire,

Beautiful from suffering—
These flowers in my hand I bring;
Red they are, I know it well,
Blood-red, as from flaming hell,
Lurid, awfully intense
With some inner crimson sense,
Bright with things I may not speak,
Lest I pain your tender cheek;
Lady, lay your hand on these,
Lily-fingers, if you please,
And it may be they shall bloom
As *white* roses from their tomb
Of centred suffering;
As a *glad* bard I shall sing,
And my Book shall no more be
Blood-drops, of a verity,
Rather tears of perfect joy,
White flowers gathered from a boy,
Petals purely white, instead
Of those awful blossoms red,
And, for beads of sanguine hue,
Only sweet tears shed by *you*,
Trickling from the eyes of green,
Sweetest colour ever seen;
With whose worship I began
Love that raised me to a man,
Sacred Love, that since pursued
Me through many a recreant mood—

Holy Love, that would not let
My weak, cowardly heart forget—
Perfect Love, that did redeem
Life from many a sinful dream—
Happy Love, that brings me here,
As of old a suppliant, dear—
Joyous Love, that draws me back
To the unforgotten track—
Faithful Love, that still shall last
When our mortal years are past,
When the heavens are clear in view,
And the heavenly mountains blue
Gleam upon us—love that ends
Not, but surely, sweetly, blends
With the fast-approaching sea
Of a white eternity.

PAIN - CHORDS.

TO BEAUTY.

PAIN-CHORDS sounding from my harp,
Sometimes bitter, sometimes sharp,
Sometimes from excess of pain
Ringing out a worthy strain,
Sometimes whispering low delight
As of waters in the night,
Sometimes burning with the heat
Of Apollo's midday feet,
Sometimes tender as the moon
Floating thro' her nightly swoon—
Such chords in my hand I bring,
Piercing all my soul I sing.
Not to personal Beauty now
Do I make my songful vow.
Not to lips of rosy red
Is my harp's allegiance wed,

Not to any breast of snow
Do I recount tales of woe,
Not to any eyes of green
Sing of sorrows I have seen,
Rather to the Lord of all
Coming, at His knees I fall,
Bringing gifts whence He may choose ;
Flowers I brought of varied hues
To my Lady—to the Lord
Many a sorrow-smitten chord
I would carry, mixed as well
With the old familiar swell
Of Love's music; lay thine hand,
God of sky, and sea, and land,
Lay thy holy hand on these,
Thy pure fingers, if it please,
And it may be they shall sound
As songs wherein joys abound,
And my Book shall no more be
Pain-chords, of a verity,
Rather tunes of perfect joy,
Glad notes chanted from a boy,
Songs of happy calm instead
Of those chords to which were wed
Storms and sick delirious things,
With black vengeance on their wings,
Many a terror and discord
Written with red point of sword,

Many an evil-sounding tune—
Beauty ! change these sad sounds soon
Into heavenly hymns of life,
That, exultant, from this strife
I may rise—remembering thee ;
Beauty, who didst ravish me,
When the first poetic fire
Swept with fury o'er my lyre—
Beauty, who would'st never let
My weak fainting heart forget—
Passionate Beauty, who didst save
From a foul, inglorious grave
My sad genius many times,
Giving me to life and rhymes
Once again—God, Saviour, Queen,
Hear me ! *thou* know'st what I mean.

MY WHOLE LIFE LONG.

Ah ! sweet, *that* vision lasted but one short summer
night ;

I dreamed of you, I prayed to you—and then you took
your flight.

I fancied on the next day I had conquered and was
strong ;

'Tis not so ! I shall dream of you *my whole life long !*

I have wooed an abstract Goddess, I have bent before
the feet

Of art with humbler homage, and have found her foot-
stool sweet,

But time brings back reality ; for once I did thee wrong,
Avenged thou art—I dream of thee my whole life long !

In life's wild turmoil mankind (so say they) doth forget
The eyes that early longing with delicious glances met ;
I doubt it—when a lull comes, that unforgotten song
Of Passion rises sweetly, thro' my whole life long !

What do I care for Progress, for Battle, or for Joy ?
True pleasure hath forsaken me, I sorrow from a boy ;
One night I seemed to reach you—now sunlit fancies
 throng,
And you shine in the sunlight my whole life long !

To merge oneself in working is well enough for those
Who never lost their reasons in smelling at a rose,
But bitter disappointment is for ever as a prong
To goad me into thoughts of Thee my whole life long !

“ Come, let it pass,” they say to one ; “ assert the inborn
 power
Of manhood : why should any man beyond the passing
 hour
Be moved by woman's beauty ? ” I know not, but the
 gong
Of vivid memory ceases not—my whole life long !

POEMS AND SONNETS.

BY GEORGE BARLOW.

In Three Parts, price 7s. 6d. each. Crown 8vo, cloth.

JOHN CAMDEN HOTTEN, 74 and 75, Piccadilly. 1871.

OPINIONS OF THE PRESS.

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"The author seems to have attained a perfect mastery over the purely mechanical part of verse-writing, which would make his productions easy reading, were it not for the weariness induced by their sameness and number. Love, animal beauty, and the superiority of theism over Christianity are the prevailing themes."—*Graphic*, Oct. 4, 1873.

"Mr. Barlow has, we have said, poetical fancy, and now and then terse expressions. For instance,

An hour of play,
A life of wrong,

expresses shortly the tale of many a sad heart; and the idea of troubles

Threshing the wheat of one's mind like a flail
is very good."—*Notts Express*, Feb. 24, 1874.

"Mr. Barlow has given us here a large number of poems on a very few subjects, and chiefly in one form—the sonnet. 'Sonnets

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